Quaderni
di Scienze Politiche

ISSN: 2532-5302
ISSN edizione online: 2532-5310

ORBEM PRUDENTER INVESTIGARE ET VERACITER AGNOSCERE

EDUCatt

21
2022

Quaderni
di Scienze Politiche

21
2022

Quaderni
di Scienze Politiche

Anno XII - 21/2022
Registrazione presso il Tribunale di Milano n. 355 del 27.6.2011

Direttore responsabile
Massimo de Leonardis (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano)

Comitato editoriale
Mireno Berrettini (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano), Francesco Bonini (Rettore Libera Università Maria Santissima Assunta, Roma), Barbara Lilla Boschetti (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano), Giuliano Caroli (Università Cusano, Roma), Rosa Caroli (Università Cà Foscari, Venezia), AntonGiulio de' Robertis (Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro), Alessandro Duce (Università di Parma), Massimiliano Guderzo (Università di Siena), Umberto Morelli (Università di Torino), Giuseppe Parlato (Università Studi Internazionali di Roma), Carola Ricci (Università di Pavia), Gianluigi Rossi (Sapienza Università di Roma), Ferdinando Sanfelice di Monteforte (Università di Trieste), Andrea Santini (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano), Andrea Ungari (Università degli Studi Guglielmo Marconi, Roma)

International Advisory Board
Alessandro Campi (Università degli Studi, Perugia), Paolo Colombo (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano), Alan P. Dobson (Swansea University), Oreste Foppiani (Webster University, Ginevra), Michael Germann (Martin Luther Universität, Halle-Wittenberg), Hubert Heyriès (Université Paul Valéry, Montpellier 3) †, Bahgat Korany (American University of Cairo), Antonio Marquina Barrio (Universidad Complutense, Madrid), Damiano Palano (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano), Vittorio Emanuele Parsi (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano), Riccardo Redaelli (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano), Luca Riccardi (Università degli Studi di Cassino e del Lazio Meridionale), Guido Samarani (Università Cà Foscari, Venezia), Maurizio E. Serra (Ambasciatore d'Italia e Accademico di Francia, Parigi-Roma), Georges-Henri Soutou (Président de l'Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques, Parigi), Krysztof Strzałka (Ambasciatore e Docente Università Jagellonica di Cracovia), Stanislav L. Tkachenko (Università di San Pietroburgo)

Segretario di redazione
Davide Borsani (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano)

La pubblicazione degli articoli è soggetta a *Peer Review* anonima.

I *Quaderni* sono liberamente scaricabili all'indirizzo Internet http://www.quaderniscienzepolitiche.it

È possibile ordinare la versione cartacea:
on line all'indirizzo www.educatt.it/libri; tramite fax allo 02.80.53.215 o via e-mail all'indirizzo librario.dsu@educatt.it (una copia € 15; abbonamento a quattro numeri € 40).

Modalità di pagamento:
- bonifico bancario intestato a EDUCatt - Ente per il Diritto allo Studio dell'Università Cattolica presso Banca Infrastrutture Innovazione e Sviluppo - IBAN: IT 08 R 03069 03390 211609500166;
- bonifico bancario intestato a EDUCatt - Ente per il Diritto allo Studio dell'Università Cattolica presso Monte dei Paschi di Siena - IBAN: IT 08 D 01030 01637 0000001901668;
- bollettino postale intestato a EDUCatt - Ente per il Diritto allo Studio dell'Università Cattolica su cc. 17710203

© 2022 **EDUCatt - Ente per il Diritto allo Studio Universitario dell'Università Cattolica**
Largo Gemelli 1, 20123 Milano - tel. 02.7234.22.35 - fax 02.80.53.215
e-mail: editoriale.dsu@educatt.it (*produzione*); librario.dsu@educatt.it (*distribuzione*)
web: *www.educatt.it/libri*

ISBN edizione cartacea: 979-12-5535-040-8
ISBN edizione digitale: 979-12-5535-014-5
ISSN: 2532-5302
ISSN edizione online: 2532-5310

Indice

Introduzione 5
di Massimo de Leonardis

The Eternal Continuity of Japanese Politics:
an Historical Analysis based on three Concepts 9
di Federico Lorenzo Ramaioli

Japan and the Genesis of APEC: A Preliminary Study
in the Light of Recently Declassified Documents 31
di Noemi Lanna

Tracing the Roots of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy:
Anxiety and Opportunism in Foreign Policy Narrative Construction
in Japan from the late 1970s to the mid-2000s 51
di Marco Zappa

Strengthening Ties at its Southern Flank: Japan's Relations
with Southeast Asia and Philippines from the «Takeshita doctrine»
to the Hashimoto Government, 1987-1998 71
di Raimondo Neironi

Grand Strategy or Grand Identity? Narratives of "Universal Values"
and Autonomy in Japanese Foreign Policy 95
di Erik Isaksson

In Memoriam: Ammiraglio Pier Paolo Ramoino 115

Gli Autori 119

Introduzione

di Massimo de Leonardis

Tra gli storici italiani delle relazioni internazionali non manca una piccola schiera di cultori delle vicende del Giappone. Sempre in Italia, lo studio dei regimi autoritari e totalitari di "destra" tra le due guerre mondiali vede comprensibilmente una netta prevalenza di opere sulla Germania nazional-socialista e sul Fascismo, nonché sui rapporti tra i due regimi. Le difficoltà linguistiche, nonché l'attenzione al teatro europeo, spiegano questi squilibri, che si riflettono anche nella manualistica di Storia delle Relazioni Internazionali.

Da quest'ultimo punto di vista, spicca per la competente attenzione al Giappone il volume di Alessandro Duce, *Storia della politica internazionale (1917-1957). Dalla Rivoluzione d'ottobre ai Trattati di Roma,* edito nel 2009, che dedica all'Impero del Sol Levante tra le due guerre mondiali molte pagine illuminanti, riprendendo poi l'argomento nei volumi successivi con dovizia di particolari.

Vorrei anche ricordare in proposito che al concorso diplomatico del 2005 la prova scritta di Storia delle relazioni internazionali verté sul tema *La penetrazione politica, culturale ed economica dell'Italia in Medio ed Estremo Oriente tra le due guerre mondiali*. Argomento suggestivo e perfettamente corretto, ma che suscitò qualche ingiustificata reazione negativa perché apparve troppo "difficile" e al di fuori del *mainstream* didattico. I giovani aspiranti alla carriera che si trovarono impreparati erano in realtà vittime di una tendenza quanto mai deplorevole diffusa negli Atenei italiani: concentrare la ricerca e addirittura la didattica dei corsi di Storia delle relazioni internazionali sui periodi più recenti, perfino successivi al 1945.

Vale inoltre la pena di rammentare che il neonato Regno d'Italia nel 1866 stabilì relazioni diplomatiche sia con la Cina sia con il Giappone, dando all'inizio preminenza formale a quest'ultimo, poiché il nostro ministro plenipotenziario, accreditato presso le

corti di Pechino e di Yeddo (l'odierna Tōkyō), fino al 1878 risiedette stabilmente nell'Impero del Sol Levante.

Uno degli autori di questo numero monografico dedicato al Giappone è proprio un giovane diplomatico, Federico Lorenzo Ramaioli, laureatosi in Giurisprudenza con chi scrive nell'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore. Egli è il curatore della prima edizione italiana, e della terza di tutto il mondo occidentale, del *Kokutai no Hongi*, un manifesto politico-culturale del Governo imperiale nipponico uscito nel 1937, fondamentale per capire le dinamiche di quegli anni controversi, con particolare riferimento al rapporto con l'Occidente e alla relazione tra Stato e Imperatore. Il suo denso saggio sottolinea che l'idea di continuità è profondamente radicata nella *Weltanschauung* giapponese. Dopo il 1945, gli Stati Uniti d'America ebbero, una volta tanto, l'intelligenza di capire che l'istituzione imperiale andava mantenuta, sia pure desacralizzata.

Al periodo del secondo dopoguerra sono appunto dedicati i saggi che seguono. Raimondo Neironi esamina la "normalizzazione" delle relazioni del Giappone con il Sud-Est Asiatico ed in particolare con le Filippine nel decennio 1987-1998, nel quadro di una strategia volta a costruire una politica estera indipendente. Noemi Lanna, sulla base anche di documenti originali declassificati, considera il ruolo del Giappone nella Costituzione nel 1989 dell'APEC (*Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation*). Erik Isaksson e Marco Zappa prendono in esame i fondamenti dottrinali della politica estera del Giappone nei decenni successivi alla fine della Guerra Fredda, miranti a costruire un'immagine ed una realtà più assertive, anche nel contesto della nuova sfida rappresentata dalla Cina. I concetti di valori universali si accompagnano ad una rivendicata leadership di Tōkyō, con sfumature diverse nei vari governi.

Come è noto, il Giappone fu obbligato dagli Stati Uniti ad approvare una Costituzione drasticamente pacifista. Gli americani in Giappone restarono sempre confinati nella loro «*little America*» a Tōkyō, dalla quale il Generale Douglas MacArthur, al quale solo 16 giapponesi parlarono più di due volte, non uscì praticamente mai. Uno degli estensori della Costituzione giapponese confessò di non avere alcuna conoscenza della storia e della cultura del Giappone. Per fortuna, come diceva Bismarck, «esiste una particolare Provvidenza divina nei confronti dei matti, dei bambini, degli ubriachi e degli Stati Uniti d'America». L'art. 9 della Costituzione

giapponese costituisce un *unicum* nel panorama mondiale, per la sua drastica enunciazione pacifista:

> Aspirando sinceramente ad una pace internazionale fondata sulla giustizia e sull'ordine, il popolo giapponese rinunzia per sempre alla guerra, quale diritto sovrano della Nazione, e alla minaccia o all'uso della forza quale mezzo per risolvere le controversie internazionali.
>
> 2. Per conseguire, l'obbiettivo proclamato nel comma precedente, non saranno mantenute forze di terra, del mare e dell'aria, e nemmeno altri mezzi bellici. Il diritto di belligeranza dello Stato non sarà riconosciuto.

In realtà nel 1954, con il pieno consenso di Washington, il parlamento giapponese approvò la legge sulle Forze di Autodifesa, dotandosi di Forze Armate a tutti gli effetti, con limiti di impiego e riguardo ad alcuni tipi di mezzi militari. Peraltro, la Marina giapponese ha ben due portaerei, formalmente e pudicamente definite cacciatorpediniere portaelicotteri, anche se ora le si sta modificando per poter imbarcare gli F-35B. La modifica dell'articolo della Costituzione è da anni tema del dibattito politico in Giappone e l'attuale governo potrebbe procedere ad attuarla.

Chiude il fascicolo il ricordo del Contrammiraglio Pier Paolo Ramoino, uno dei più illustri studiosi di Storia navale e del Potere Marittimo della sua generazione, i cui articoli sono comparsi più volte sulle pagine dei *Quaderni di Scienze Politiche*.

Come sempre, rinnovo un sentito ringraziamento al Direttore del Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche dell'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Prof. Damiano Palano, per il suo convinto e fattivo sostegno ai *Quaderni*, la cui pubblicazione iniziò nel 2011, durante il secondo mandato di chi scrive alla guida del Dipartimento.

The Eternal Continuity of Japanese Politics: an Historical Analysis based on three Concepts

di Federico Lorenzo Ramaioli[1]

Abstract *– In Japanese recent history, the fragmentation of the political spectrum appears as something structural of its national system. Nevertheless, beyond the exteriority of political factions and currents, a sense of eternal continuity on crucial issues seems to permeate Japanese politics and even Japanese law. This ideal continuity, also rooted in the tension between tradition and innovation characterizing the land of the Rising Sun, can be analyzed from multiple viewpoints. In this article, I will examine it according to three concepts: the role of the imperial institution, the concept of kokutai and the maintenance in power of the ruling class in time of political crisis.*

Introduction

When thinking about Japan, it is hard not to think about a country that had successfully conjugated, in the course of the centuries, tradition and innovation, antiquity and modernity, in an inspiring and unique fashion that actually came to define its very image. The reverence toward tradition, in particular, can be considered as a characterizing feature of Japanese society, outlining both an ethic and an esthetic, so visible as a never-changing trait of the country's way of conceiving the world and society. Japanese spiritual syncretism greatly contributed to shape a collective identity based on concepts such the Confucian ancestors' cult, the Buddhist sense of impermanence and the idea of a creative force permeating nature and reality. All of these cultural influxes built a cultural and intellectual milieu in which the idea of continuity

[1] The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any Italian institution or agency.

could not but play a preeminent role in conceiving social dynamics and relations.

In the political and legal fields as well, the idea of continuity is something deeply rooted in the Japanese *Weltanschauung*. In spite of the changes and ruptures that have taken place in the land of the Rising Sun, modifying the concrete ways of exercising power and of delivering justice, it is possible to detect a more profound sense of continuity that, more or less consciously, creates a *fil rouge* between different times and different political governances. It is a cultural and spiritual heritage that permeates the Japanese way of thinking and that, in the course of history, has been manifested in different ways and in multiple circumstances. Japan is indeed a country in which every political analysis must be properly contextualized from a cultural and historical point of view, to be harmoniously located in its native theoretical framework and to avoid intellectual biases. To understand Japanese political dynamics in our contemporaneity, it is therefore necessary to priorly examine its sense of ideal and uninterrupted continuity, that flows through the centuries and lasts up to these days, analyzing some recurring trends and evident parallelisms. This is even truer with regard to the recent past, in the timespan between the Meiji Restoration (1868) and the adoption of the democratic constitution (1947), after the defeat in the World War II, a period that greatly contributed to define the present attitude of modern Japan toward law and politics.

In this article, I will examine the ideal continuity of Japanese political and legal system with particular reference to this crucial period and based on three aspects: the role of the imperial institution, the peculiar idea of *kokutai*, and the maintenance in power of the ruling class in times of political and social changes. Each one of these dimensions is functional in understanding a sense of continuity, that will ultimately help grasping some usually undetected or underrated recurring themes and schemes in Japanese law and politics.

The role of the imperial institution

Japan is the world's most ancient monarchy, with its 2.600 years long tradition of imperial government, whose origin is however

suspended between legend and history. While the first emperors are undoubtedly to be considered mythological heroes of Japanese folklore, bridging heaven and earth, the historical figures of the existing rulers draw nevertheless a long-lasting history of monarchical system, like in no other country in the world. This is not only true with reference to the institution *per se*, but also and even the more if we consider that in Japan the imperial line of succession has ideally never been broken since the mythical foundation of the country. This is also a point in which legend and history meet, but in spite of the lack of reliability as for the first centuries of the country's history, it highlights the essentiality and the importance of the unicity of the ruling dynasty. It establishes a narrative, in which the imperial institution with its unbroken and uninterrupted succession to the Chrysanthemum Throne represents a guarantee of stability for the nation as a whole.

In the context of the dimension of continuity of Japanese politics, the role of the imperial institution can be examined according to multiple viewpoints, with special reference to the emperor's cult, the Confucian legacy and the political role of the sovereigns.

As for the first point, it is preliminary necessary to observe that the cult of the emperor acquired a central dimension in the political system of Japan only in relatively recent times, especially after the Meiji Restoration of 1868, when it was developed and assimilated to the framework of State *shintō*[2]. It was in those years, after the fall of the Tokugawa *bakufu*, that the Meiji oligarchs stressed the necessity of revering the emperor to foster their political narrative aimed at restoring the centrality of the imperial court in the person of young Mutsuhito. Although not a religious cult, this reverence for the emperor can be undoubtedly considered as spiritual and cultural at the same time, in that it strengthens the bond between the people and the ruler, highlighting at the same time the divine origin of the reigning family. The very word *tennō*, commonly translated as "emperor", literally means "heavenly ruler", establishing a first connection between heaven

[2] On this, see S. Shimazono, *State Shintō and Emperor Veneration*, in B.A. Shillony (ed.), *The Emperors of Modern Japan*, Leiden, 2008, pp. 53-79. On the peculiar conception of the emperor's divinity, see B.A. Shillony, *Emperor and Religion in Twentieth-Century Japan*, in *Collected Writings of Ben-Ami Shillony*, London-New York, 2005, pp. 37-39.

and earth[3], not without Confucian reminiscences. According to Japanese cosmogony, in the foundation's myth the first emperor, Jinmu *tennō*, is a descendant of solar deity Amaterasu-ō-mi-kami, inscribing at an ideal level the ruling dynasty into a legendary and divine ancestry[4]. This ascendancy is more than an ennobling factor like in the case of Western encomiastic literature, but is actually functional to shape a political awareness, in which the Japanese rulers, and the Japanese people for extension, are considered to be different from all other people. It is a sort of manifest destiny, in which the uninterrupted lineage of Amaterasu reigns because of a sort of fatalistic providence, granting political continuity to the Throne and because of the Throne: while other reigns and rulers change and fall, Japan stably stays through the centuries, from the ancient times of the *kami* to the industrial era. The implications in terms both of domestic and foreign politics are evident, and this is especially true after the Meiji Restoration, with the progressive expansion of Japan's sphere of influence in Asia. With the advent of the militarist era and with the degeneration of the Pacific war, the emperor's cult becomes the more and the more emphasized, becoming a central cultural force in the theorization of a "new order" in the Asian continent[5], and for the establishment of a "co-prosperity sphere" in the region[6]. With the defeat and the US occupation, a reconsideration of the imperial cult happened to be necessary, with the so-called "humanity

[3] Replicating «the rule of the *kami*, the Emperor stands between the worlds of shadow and light and extends his own authority into every corner of the realm» (J.E. Ketelaar [1990], *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan. Buddhism and Its Persecution*, Princeton, 1993, p. 62).

[4] The chronicles of the first emperors and their divine ancestry are recalled in the *Kojiki* and in the *Nihonshoki*. For a general overview on Japanese mythology, on which literature is extensive, see J.S. Brownlee, *Political Thought in Japanese Historical Writing. From Kojiki (712) to Tokushi Yoron (1712)*, Waterloo (CA), 1991, pp. 8-32.

[5] The idea of a "new order" in Asia comes from Prime Minister Konoe Fumimaro's proclamation in 1937. On this, J.B. Crowley, *A New Asian Order. Some Notes on Prewar Japanese Nationalism*, in S.S. Large (ed.), *Shōwa Japan. Political, Economic and Social History – 1926-1989*, vol. I, London-New York, 1998, pp. 149-150.

[6] On this peculiar idea, in an historical perspective, see J.A. Yellen, *The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere: When Total Empire Met Total War*, Ithaca-London, 2019.

declaration" (*Ningen-sengen*) issued by Hirohito on January 1st, 1946, whose meaning was however far less radical that what has been believed in the West. Indeed, and having regard to the actual text of the rescript, emperor Hirohito never spoke about a change in the conception of the imperial institution, but on the contrary highlighted once again a line of continuity with the innovations of the Meiji era[7]. This is made possible by the deep difference in the concept of divinity in the West and in Japan, where the idea of *kami* is far from representing a god in the Western sense. If the emperor is a manifest *kami* (*akitsumikami*), it doesn't mean that he has to be considered as an incarnated god, but more as a sacred person in his official role, thus with a possibility of minimizing every possible change even after the war[8].

The Confucian legacy, still a cultural influence in Japanese syncretic society, contributes in making the imperial institution a sort of guarantor of the eternal continuity of Japanese political system. Confucius firstly introduced in China the fundamental concept of the mandate of heaven (*tiānmìng*), according to which only a heavenly legitimized sovereign could effectively rule the Middle Kingdom in prosperity and peace[9]. This philosophy came to influence also the Japanese political discourse, however in a hybridized form and with an essential transformation. In Japan, the son of Heaven (*tenshi*) did rule because of his belonging to an unbroken line of emperors. As a consequence, in this conception Heaven does not bestow its favor on a single ruler as in the Chinese case, thus potentially fostering rebellion and alternation of dynasties as in the theorization of Mencius[10], but on a reigning family. Contrarily to what happened in the Chinese narrative, the heavenly favor is not perceived in omens or in the people's approval, but is absorbed by the divine origin of the Yamato dynasty,

[7] In this sense, J.W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat. Japan in the Wake of World War II*, New York, 1999, pp. 314- 317.

[8] Cfr. T. Suzuki, *The Rhetoric of Emperor Hirohito. Continuity and Rupture in Japan's Dramas of Modernity*, Newcastle upon Tyne, 2017, pp. 126 ff.

[9] Cfr. D.A. Pankenier, *The Cosmo-Political Background of Heaven's Mandate*, "Early China", vol. XX, 1995, p. 166.

[10] On Mencius' position, see A.T. Nuyen, *The 'Mandate of Heaven': Mencius and the Divine Command Theory of Political Legitimacy*, "Philosophy East and West", vol. LXIII, n. 2, April 2013, pp. 113-126.

which acquired the legitimacy from the *kami* and reigns because of it. Therefore, a Confucian principle that in China was actually introduced to legitimize a rebellion[11], whose consequence are still visible today with reference to a culture-specific idea of revolution[12], in Japan was transformed to strengthen the uninterrupted continuity of the ruling dynasty[13]. Moreover, the Confucian reverence for the ancestors cannot but establish a powerful bond not only between past and present emperors, but also between the imperial household and the Japanese people. It is not by chance, from this point of view, that Japanese society had already been described in the Meiji period as multiple households under the imperial family[14]. Although with the introduction of Western nuclear family in the place of the traditional *ie* the family-like socials and political relations have sensibly changed, Confucian ideals are still present in Japanese society, contributing to stabilize its political and social systems starting from the imperial institution as its immutable cornerstone.

Even more importantly, the question can be analyzed from the point of view of the political prerogatives of the sovereign, the field that has apparently undergone the most relevant changes in the last century. During the Tokugawa period (1603-1868), the role of the emperor was purely ceremonial and deprived of actual political power in favor of the *shōgun*. In spite of his being confined in the Kyōto imperial court in a time when the political interests were rapidly moving to Edo (now Tōkyō), the *tennō* was still the cultural and spiritual capstone of the social and political

[11] The legitimation of the rebel Zhou dynasty against the Shang. On this, M.J. Puett, *To Become a God. Cosmology, Sacrifice, and Self-divinization in Early China*, Cambridge, 2002, pp. 54-60.

[12] In Chinese, the very term revolution is translated with *gémìng*, which literally means "mandate changing", clearly referring to the ancestral idea of the mandate of Heaven. This point, undoubtedly rich of implications, falls however outside of the scope of this article.

[13] Cfr. H.G. Blocker - C.L. Starling, *Japanese Philosophy*, Albany, 2001, pp. 20, 66; E.J. Perry [2002], *Challenging the Mandate of Heaven. Social Protest and State Power in China*, London-New York, 2015, p. ix.

[14] On this, the position of preeminent constitutionalist Hozumi Yatsuka is particularly relevant. On this, see R.H. Minear, *Japanese Tradition and Western Law. Emperor, State, and Law in the Thought of Hozumi Yatsuka*, Cambridge, 1970, pp. 56-83.

system, providing legitimation to the *shōgun* with his tacit presence. With the outbreak of the Boshin war in 1868, the Tokugawa regime was overthrown, and the Meiji Restoration[15] provided for a new expansion of the imperial political prerogatives. Emperor Meiji inaugurated a period of industrial, military and political development, eventually turning Japan into a modern power and gaining a position of hegemony in the region. However, even in this case the emperor was not to be regarded as an autocratic ruler, but as the center and focus of a complex system of power ruled by a professional oligarchy[16]. If on the one hand the role of the sovereign changed with the Restoration, on the other hand it proceeded also along a line of relevant continuity, that is to say the maintenance of a position of spiritual primacy derived also by a hieratic detachment from concrete political affairs. The Meiji constitution, adopted in 1889, was indeed explicit in establishing as a founding principle of the legal and political system the one according to which the empire was to be ruled over by a line of emperors «unbroken for ages eternal»[17]. It enshrined the mystical ideal of the uninterrupted imperial family more than the actual role of the ruler as an individual. Even with the militarist era, the political spectrum considerably shifted to more marked ultra-nationalistic positions, and the cult of the Yamato dynasty was even more emphasized, but the actual role of the emperor was once again maintained stably within its conceptual boundaries. With the advent of the US occupation, General Douglas MacArthur created his own personal government with non-secondary reminiscences of a shogunate, establishing a close relationship with emperor Hirohito to legitimize his rule, as the Tokugawa had

[15] On this period, the fundamental volume is W.G. Beasley, *The Meiji Restoration*, Stanford, 1972.

[16] As Titus suggests, in Meiji Japan «the political centrality of the imperial institution was created *for*, not *by*, the emperor and imperial family, and the emperor's role from 1889 to 1945 was managed *for* him, not *by* him» (D.A. Titus, *The Making of the 'Symbol Emperor System' in Postwar Japan*, "Modern Asian Studies", vol. XIV, n. 4, October 1980, p. 530).

[17] «The Empire of Japan shall be reigned over and governed by a line of Emperors unbroken for ages eternal» (Constitution of the empire of Japan, 1889, art. 1).

done[18]. On the request of MacArthur's Supreme Command of the Allied Powers (SCAP), the imperial institution was then reformed in order to preserve it, and to avoid more traumatic fractures that were advocated by the Soviet Union[19]. According to the 1947 constitution, which outlined the new system in its first chapter, the emperor was defined as «the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people»[20], deprived on any effective political power[21]. As evident, the figure of the *tennō* was somehow redefined as it was during the Edo period, with almost the same function although serving a democratic political system[22]. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to consider the role of the emperor as a mere symbolic sovereign as in some European monarchies, given the deeply different cultural and historical context. As pointed out by then Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru after the adoption of the new constitution, from a cultural perspective the role of the emperor and its perception by the people was not changed[23], and in some respects could not be changed, because it was his political

[18] In this sense, W. De Lange, *A History of Japanese Journalism. Japan's Press Club as the Last Obstacle to a Mature Press*, Richmond, 1998, p. 165. The definition of MacArthur as a foreign *shōgun* is also present in R. Harvey, *American Shōgun. General MacArthur, Emperor Hirohito and the Drama of Modern Japan*, New York, 2006.

[19] On this point, see H. Borton, *Spanning Japan's Modern Century. The Memoirs of Hugh Borton*, Lanham, 2002, p. 175. Cf. also Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, cit., p. 363.

[20] «The emperor shall be the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people, deriving his position from the will of the people with whom resides sovereign power» (Constitution of Japan, 1947, art. 1).

[21] «The emperor shall perform only such acts in matters of state as are provided for in this Constitution and he shall not have powers related to government» (Constitution of Japan, 1947, art. 4, par. 1).

[22] On this, amongst extensive volumes, see Titus, *op. cit.*, pp 529-578; H.P. Bix, *Inventing the 'Symbol Monarchy' in Japan, 1945-52*, "Journal of Japanese Studies", vol. XXI, n. 2, Summer 1995, pp. 319-363.

[23] «Legally speaking, sovereign power has passed from the emperor to the people. But we have only to look back on the history of our country to know that our emperors have never been identified with autocratic power. People have always rallied to them to resist tyranny. Whatever the vicissitudes of legal phraseology, the conception that we Japanese have of our emperors has never changed» S. Yoshida [1961], *Yoshida Shigeru. Last Meiji Man* (already published with the title *The Yoshida Memoirs. The Story of Japan in Crisis*), trans. Yoshida Kenichi, Hiroshi Nara, ed. Hiroshi Nara, Lanham, 2007, p. 119.

detachment to actually expand his role beyond the literalist approach of the law[24]. Even today, the emperor's role is far from being confined within legal provisions, assuming a cultural relevance that contributes to make him a stabilizing factor in Japanese politics, granting it its characterizing dimension of continuity.

The idea of *kokutai*

Another concept contributing to draw a line of continuity in Japanese politics is the ethereal idea of *kokutai*. *Kokutai* is an almost untranslatable concept, literally meaning the "national structure", or less literally but more appropriately the "national essence"[25]. It is not to be confused with the form of government or with the concrete shapes the exercise of power assumes in a determined historical phase, referred to as *seitai* according to Baron Katō Hiroyuki in 1874. While the *seitai* changes with times and circumstances, as it did with the fall of the shogunate and with the Meiji Restoration, the *kokutai* is immutable and eternal[26]. It is more like a spiritual and cultural essence permeating the national history and the national conscience, something deeply rooted with the Yamato culture and of ancient Chinese derivation. Once again, the idea of *kokutai* is inextricably interconnected with the belief in the unbroken lineage of Japanese emperors, defining a unique structure of the State and a unique

[24] Yoshida expressed this position in a private letter to his father-in-law, Count Makino Nobuaki. On this, see Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, cit., p. 390. Cfr. K.J. Ruoff, Symbol Monarchy, in S. Buckley (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Contemporary Japanese Culture*, London, 2002, p. 490.

[25] In literature, this idea has been variously translated, with terms including "national polity", "national essence" or "national structure". While each definition and translation may grasp an aspect of this multifaceted concept, there is actually no one that can properly describe it in its completeness. Therefore, I will maintain here the original Japanese term.

[26] See H. Katō, *Kokutai Shinron*, Tōkyō, 1874, ch. 7. On this distinction, see J. Adeney Thomas, *Reconfiguring Modernity. Concepts of Nature in Japanese Political Ideology*, Berkeley-Los Angeles, 2001, p. 97; J.K. Fisher, *The Meirokusha and the Building of a Strong and Prosperous Nation*, in H. Wray - H. Conroy (eds), *Japan Examined. Perspectives on Modern Japanese History*, Honolulu, 1983, p. 86.

way of conceiving it, beyond the actual attributions of powers and political prerogatives[27].

The concept of *kokutai* remained quite undefined until relatively recent times, with its first important theorization dating back to 1825 with Aizawa Seishisai of the Mito school, in a period of great intellectual ferment[28]. With the Meiji Restoration, with theorists like the already mentioned Katō and Fukuzawa Yukichi[29], the concept was better defined and enriched by a renewed political and juridical significance, although a punctual and univocal definition was something rather difficult to provide. The political relevance of the *kokutai* relies in its relation with the emperor and with the legal system, an issue greatly explored and developed during the Meiji era. Jurists like Hozumi Yatsuka, followed by Sasaki Sōichi, linked the idea of *kokutai* with the opening of the Meiji constitution, anchoring it to the legal and political enshrinement of an unbroken dynasty of ruling emperors. In this new cultural and legal orthodoxy, emperor, people and State became one, in a relationship absorbed by an all-encompassing vision granting Japan, from this perspective, a unique place amongst world powers. The idea of an immutable and immaterial *kokutai*, which could easily overcome both historical contingencies and political divergences, served therefore as a theoretical basis to provide continuity and stability to a political spectrum that had been chronically fragmented since the Restoration. Indeed, it is within this framework that every possible tension had to be

[27] On the evolution of the idea of *kokutai*, see J.S. Brownlee, *Four Stages of the Japanese Kokutai (National Essence)*, in M. Nakamura (ed.), *Japan in the Global Age. Cultural, Historical and Political Issues on Asia, Environment, Households and International Communication*, Vancouver, 2001, pp. 15 ff.; J. Valderrama López, *Beyond Words: the "Kokutai" and its Background*, "Revista Historia Moderna I Contemporànis", n. 4, Barcelona, 2006, pp. 125-136. For a juridical analysis, see F.L. Ramaioli, *Unbroken for Ages Eternal. The Concept of Kokutai in Japanese Constitutionalism*, "Journal of Comparative Law", vol. XV, n. 1, 2020, pp. 1-14. See also my volume: F.L. Ramaioli, *Dal mito del cielo alla legge dello Stato. Kokutai e ordinamento giuridico in Giappone*, Turin, 2022.

[28] See S. Aizawa [1825], *Shinron*, in *Nihon Shisō Taikei*, vol. LIII, Tōkyō 1973, pp. 50-159; for an English translation, B.T. Wakabayashi [1986], *Anti-foreignism and Western Learning in Early-modern Japan. The New Theses of 1825*, Cambridge, 1999, pp. 147-280. For a comment on Aizawa's position, *ibi*, pp. 100-146.

[29] See Y. Fukuzawa [1875], *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization*, trans. David A. Dilworth, G. Cameron Hurst III, New York, 2009.

ideally brought back to unity, based on the unquestionable and unalterable eternal essence of Japan, guaranteed by the continuity of the Yamato family line. To summarize the various positions regarding the *kokutai*, the imperial Ministry of Education commissioned and published in 1937 the *Kokutai no Hongi*, the fundamental cultural and political manifesto of the militarist regime, in which the proper contextualization of the "Japanese essence" plays the most relevant role in outlining a national polity[30].

During the years of the US occupation, the concept was associated with the defeated autocratic regime, and was therefore repelled by the occupants, also banning the publication of the *Kokutai no Hongi*. Correctly, MacArthur's headquarters understood that the *kokutai* was not embodied into a piece of positive legislation, but actually went beyond it, as far as being considered as a comprehensive way of conceiving the notion of imperial sovereignty[31]. The abrogation of the Meiji constitution and the enactment of the 1947 fundamental charter, with the changes in the legislative discipline regarding the emperor, led various politicians and academics to ask themselves whether the *kokutai* had actually survived. If the intention of the occupants was undoubtedly that of erasing from the national conscience this ideal, which had come to be furtherly radicalized in the years of the war, its very ethereal and immaterial dimension made it rather difficult to overcome. Some eminent figures of the Japanese intellectual élite of the time, like the already mentioned professor Sasaki and like Minobe Tatsukichi, maintained that the new constitutional system based on a symbolic emperor actually had cancelled the idea of *kokutai*. On the contrary, others like philosopher Watsuji Tetsurō claimed that a new constitutional framework could easily

[30] Ministry of Education of Imperial Japan (ed.), *Kokutai no Hongi*, Tōkyō, 1937. For an English translation, R.K. Hall (ed.), *Kokutai No Hongi. Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan*, trans. John Owen Gauntlett, Cambridge, 1949. For the one and only Italian edition, see F.L. Ramaioli (ed.), *Kokutai no Hongi. L'essenza del Giappone*, Rome, 2021.

[31] «Kokutai – national polity – means, to the Japanese, the unity of people and Emperor in a family relationship that is immutable and indestructible. The doctrine is not to be found expressed in its entirety in any document. It is not a concept of law though it might be considered one of sovereignty» SCAP, *Political Reorientation of Japan, September 1945 to September 1948*, vol. I, Washington DC, 1949, p. 93.

change the form of government in its exteriority (*seitai*) but not the immutable essence of the *kokutai*, which prenscinded from the concrete organization of State powers[32]. From this perspective, if the *kokutai* existed when ancient Japan did not have any constitution, then it could clearly survive to the abrogation of the Meiji charter. This position is particularly interesting, in that it takes into account the Japanese history as a whole, conceiving the *kokutai* as something predating Meiji society and its theorization. It also happened to be shared by the Yoshida government then in power, by the evocative words of Minister of State Kanamori Tokujirō, according to whom «the water flows, the river stays»[33]. Prime Minister Yoshida himself continued to mention the idea of *kokutai* also after the end of the occupation[34], confirming that it could be evidently considered as an element of continuity between both the autocratic and the democratic Japanese experiences, in spite of the relevant changes in terms of form of government and attribution of powers.

As it has been argued in literature, notwithstanding the disappearance of the term *kokutai* from the public discourse, its traces remained still visible in Japanese society in the following decades[35]. Even today, it is still possible to consider it as a long-lasting ideal shaping a national self-awareness that goes beyond both positive legislation and historical periods, or, as it had been defined, the «quintessence of Japanese particularity»[36]. Notwithstanding an evident change in the political lexicon regarding this concept,

[32] On the various position about the possible maintenance of the *kokutai* or on its destruction or alteration following the enactment of the new constitution, see P.J. Herzog, *Political Theories in the Japanese Constitution*, "Monumenta Nipponica", vol. VII, n. 1/2, Tōkyō, 1951, pp. 1-23; Id, *Japan's Pseudo Democracy*, London-New York, 1993, p. 19.

[33] Cit. in Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, cit., p. 389.

[34] In his official interpretation of the new constitution, during the years of the occupation Yoshida had already maintained the *kokutai* as the base of the State's life, without any possibility of abrogation or alteration. After the occupation, he continued using the term during Akihito's proclamation as Crown Prince in 1952. Cfr. J.W. Dower, *Empire and Aftermath. Yoshida Shigeru and the Japanese Experience, 1878-1954*, Cambridge, 1988, p. 324; N. Inose - H. Sato [1995], *Persona. A Biography of Yukio Mishima*, Berkeley, 2012, p. 117.

[35] In this sense, R.A. Miller, *Japan's Modern Myth*, New York, 1982, p. 95.

[36] R.N. Bellah, *Japan's Cultural Identity: Some Reflections on the Work of Watsuji Tetsuro*, "The Journal of Asian Studies", vol. XXIV, n. 4, August 1965, p. 576.

the *kokutai*, extensively considered as a national character deeply inscribed into the Japanese conscience and mentality, cannot be considered as something abrogated by a change in the legislation. As mentioned above, for instance, the consideration the Japanese people has of their emperor never really changed, and is something that goes far beyond the specific prerogatives the constitution grants to the *tennō*. The invisible and immutable *kokutai* permeates this forma mentis, serving a stabilizing function that should not be confused with politics and law in their exterior dimensions. On the contrary, it is an element of tacit continuity, adaptive and malleable, which contributes to maintain a cultural homogeneity and stability also in the political field, and in spite of long-lasting divergences about particular problematics and questions.

The continuity in the ruling class

After the defeat of Axis powers, in Japan a process of «political reorientation»[37] of society took place under MacArthur's SCAP. The ban on the *Kokutai no Hongi* was an example of it, as well as the enactment of the new constitution with its new discipline of the symbolic emperor and with its pacifist clause. Another example is undoubtedly represented by the Tōkyō War Crimes Trials, with the juridical critiques that has been moved in respects of being a so-called expression of victor's justice. Nevertheless, this process to demilitarize society was much more complex and controversial than the denazification of postwar Germany.

To purify Japanese politics from the influence of the defeated regime, especially before the first democratic elections to be held in the country, the SCAP inaugurated a massive purge of exponents and cooperators of the militarist and ultra-nationalist ruling élite, banning them from participating into the democratic life of postwar Japan[38]. At the beginning, this process was

[37] This phraseology comes from SCAP reports: *Political Reorientation of Japan, cit.*

[38] On this, see H.H. Baerwald, *The Purge of Japanese Leaders Under the Occupation*, Berkeley, 1959, pp. 25 ff.; SCAP, *Political Reorientation of Japan*, *cit.*, pp. 59 ff.

rather scrupulous, causing the ban of intellectuals and authors whose guilt was simply that of having praised certain aspects of prewar Japan. The most illustrious politician to be purged was a preeminent figure of Japanese conservativism and founder of the Liberal Party, Hatoyama Ichirō, who had served as Ministry of Education between 1931 and 1934. Hatoyama's purging prevented him from concurring in the 1946 elections, and probably from becoming Prime Minister, paving the way to the multiple premierships of his conservative rival Yoshida Shigeru, factually changing Japan's political life of those years[39].

However, the emergence of the confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union in the context of the Cold War and in the Korean conflict rapidly changed the objectives and priorities of the occupants. The communist threat, which menaced to progressively undermine Japan's hardy recovered political stability and to win it over to the Eastern Bloc, forced the SCAP to reconsider the purging of nationalist elements, and to radically adapt its strategies to the different international scenario. Although the Japanese Communist Party did not represent a major political or cultural force in the country, its recovered status of lawfulness after decades of ban fueled its consensus, also arising criticism toward the Imperial Household, held responsible for the war, and the Allied occupants alike[40].

This new trend in the SCAP politics was inaugurated by MacArthur's direct prohibition of the general strike of February 1947 promoted by Ii Yashirō[41], which was politically to target the new Yoshida administration[42] that was backed by the US headquarters. With the confrontation between the communist forces from one side and the SCAP and the Japanese government from the other acquiring the more and the more the characteristic of a new social emergency, the occupants were forced to intervene

[39] Cfr. S.H. Nolte, *Liberalism in Modern Japan: Ishibashi Tanzan and His Teachers, 1905-1960*, Berkeley, 1987, pp. 320 ff.

[40] On this, see K. Henshall [1999], *A History of Japan: From Stone Age to Superpower*, Basingstoke-New York, 2012, pp. 152-154.

[41] Cfr. D. MacArthur, *Reminiscences: General of the Army Douglas MacArthur*, New York, 1964, p. 353.

[42] Cfr. C. Tsuzuki, *The Pursuit of Power in Modern Japan, 1825-1995*, Oxford, 2000, pp. 360-361; H. Kawanishi, *The Human Face of Industrial Conflict in Post-War Japan*, London, 1999, pp. 144 ff.

directly. Since March 1948, the right to strike was sensibly limited or revoked to certain categories[43], and the publication of *Akahata* (Red Flag), the official newspaper of the Communist Party, was suspended[44]. On June 6th, 1950, MacArthur formally asked the Yoshida government to adopt all the measures deemed as necessary to ban from public offices a determined list of persons, all members of the Central Committee of the Japanese Communist Party. It is significant to observe that the SCAP directives quoted by the General, SCAPIN n. 548 and n. 550, were the same that had been used to ban nationalist politicians, with an evident continuity as for the legal and administrative instruments used, but with a radical shift in the final aim[45]. This progressive action took the form of a "red purge"[46], through which the Communist Party was maintained legal as for its status, but limited in its public influence, that was considered threatening to Japan's fragile democracy and overall stability. This "reverse course" of SCAP politics[47], as it eventually came to be known, was favorably considered and actively implemented by Prime Minister Yoshida, himself a fervent anticommunist[48], who served as a precious ally to MacArthur during this delicate phase of the occupation.

The reverse course was not limited to the ban of communist militants from Japan's public life, but also, and more significantly, to the complete reversal of the purge initially carried out against the nationalists of the defeated regime. Since June 20th, 1951, the

[43] Cfr. E.K. Tipton, *Modern Japan: A Social and Political History*, London-New York, 2002, p. 258.

[44] Cf. W. Haruk, *The Korean War: An International History*, Lanham, 2014, p. 90.

[45] General Douglas MacArthur to Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru, June 6th, 1950, U.S. National archives (RG331) (Available at www.ndl.go.jp).

[46] On this, see the comprehensive work of E. Takemae [1983], *Allied Occupation of Japan* (already published as *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and Its Legacy*), trans. Robert Ricketts, Sebastian Swann, New York, 2002, pp. 393 ff.; see also J. Kingston, *Japan in Transformation, 1945-2010*, London-New York, 2011, pp. 13-16; Y. Nozaki, *War Memory, Nationalism and Education in Postwar Japan: The Japanese History Textbook Controversy and Ienaga Saburo's Court Challenges*, London-New York, 2008, pp. 17-18.

[47] On the reverse course in general, consider also my article, F.L. Ramaioli, *Il nazionalismo giapponese e le politiche del 'corso inverso'*, "Nuova Storia Contemporanea", seconda serie, n. 2, Le Lettere, Florence, August 2018, pp. 165-189.

[48] For instance, Yoshida, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

Japanese government revoked indeed the ban on 2.958 persons already purged from public life. This meant not only suspending the previous purge to leave room for a new one, but also allowing the return of already purged political, academic or administrative personnel to participate in Japan's new life and actually take back some of their former positions. If Hatoyama Ichirō could be considered the most illustrious example of purged politician, he can be also considered as the most famous rehabilitated one. After the fall of Yoshida and the end of his multiple premierships, Hatoyama not only came back to active politics, but was also elected Prime Minister between 1954 and 1956, also contributing to the creation of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) from the merging of the Liberal Party and the Democratic Party[49]. In the Hatoyama cabinet, the office of Minister of Foreign Affairs was also held by Shigemitsu Mamoru, who held the same role in prewar Japan, and who signed the unconditional surrender of the empire on September 2nd, 1945, before being sentenced to seven years in prison during the Tōkyō Trial[50]. Another famous case is represented by Kishi Nobosuke, who held relevant offices during the past regime and was even appointed Minister of Commerce in General Hideki Tōjō's cabinet. Kishi was then rehabilitated and elected Prime Minister between 1957 and 1960, notwithstanding his being initially imprisoned with the accusation of war crimes[51]. Even after MacArthur's destitution, this rehabilitation process continued until the end of the occupation, until almost all the previously purged nationalists were allowed to come back, and sometimes to play relevant roles in Japanese postwar society.

The reverse course was not something limited to the political domain, but affected also the intellectual life of the Rising Sun, with many rehabilitated figures belonging to the academic and cultural fields. Moreover, the return in power of previously

[49] On the political activity of Hatoyama, see M. Itoh, *The Hatoyama Dynasty: Japanese Political Leadership Through the Generations*, Basingstoke, 2003, pp. 75-103.

[50] See D. Kurzman, *Kishi and Japan: The Search for the Sun*, New York, 1960, pp. 258 ff.

[51] On this, see S. Guthrie - Shiumiz, *Japan, the United States, and the Cold War, 1945-1960*, in M.P. Leffler - O.A. Westad (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, vol. I, Cambridge, 2010, p. 250.

purged politicians provided the country with a more free and pluralistic view on the imperial past of Japan, in place of the quite steady historical reconstruction that had been presented as the only possible one in the first months of the occupation. Dower, for instance, goes as far as saying that after the reverse course the memory of Japanese war crimes was consciously avoided[52], to leave room for this new political course.

It is in this context that the maintenance in power of the same political class granted Japan a considerable stability and, most of all, a line of direct continuity with the prewar experiences, in spite of the necessary changes in the form of government. The nationalist politicians that came back to power since 1951, after the Yoshida cabinets that were in turn nationalist as for their political orientation, shaped Japanese politics for decades to come, establishing their own political classes and élites, with names that were destined to ascend in turn to the top positions of the country. For instance, it was in the Yoshida cabinets that Satō Eisaku, adoptive brother of Kishi Nobosuke and son-in-law of Matsuoka Yosuke who had signed the Tripartite Pact, rapidly gained political consideration amongst Japanese conservatives, eventually serving multiple times and Minister and as Prime Minister for three terms, in 1964, in 1967 and in 1970[53]. Again, it was under Kishi's term that fervent patriot Nakasone Yasuhiro was appointed Minister for Science, to become in turn Prime Minister between 1982 and 1987[54]. Kishi himself was grandfather of Prime Minister Abe Shinzō (2006-2007, 2012-2020), and both Hatoyama and Yoshida founded political dynasties with non-secondary implications visible also in recent years, like in the cases of late Prime Ministers Hatoyama Yukio (2009-2010), grandson of Ichirō, and Asō Tarō (2008-2009), grandson of Yoshida.

This continuity is also evident in the creation of the political association *Nippon Kaigi* in 1997, after the merging of other

[52] J.W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, cit., p. 508.

[53] Cfr. N. Kiishi, *Satō Eisaku (1901-1975)*, in L.G. Perez (ed.), *Japan at War: An Encyclopedia*, Santa Barbara, 2013, p. 364.

[54] On Nakasone, see H.D.P. Envall, *Japanese Diplomacy: The Role of Leadership*, Albany, 2015, pp. 137-163.

nationalistic realities[55]. The *Nippon Kaigi*, whose influence lasts up to the present days, has been quite successful in gathering and affiliating many high exponents of Japanese politics, including Prime Ministers like Koizumi Jun'ichirō, the already mentioned Asō and Abe, and preset-day Prime Minister Kishida Fumio. The association aims at providing an alternative version of the role of Japan in the wartime period, revisiting and valorizing the imperial legacy and, at some extent, restoring some of its features including the State *shintō* system, rearm the country and revising the pacifist constitution[56]. The controversial visits of top politicians to the Yasukuni shrine to honor the war dead, including those who had been judged as war criminals, are to be also located in a spirit of ideal continuity that never ceased to exist in Japanese politics, notwithstanding the physiological differences in terms of political currents. The reverse course in the SCAP politics during the years of occupation cannot but be considered as a major cause of this *fil rouge*, which prescinds from particular and personal positions, to embrace the political spectrum in a wider sense, reviving ancestral notions and concepts that, in other contexts, would have been irremediably lost.

Conclusions

Japan is a country in which the political world has always been divided and fragmented, characterized as it has always been by a rather large numbers of parties and currents. Even the Liberal Democratic Party, which has successfully secured its semi-hegemonic position, is structurally organized in multiple currents, with a range of different political stances within it. During the militarist era, which can be considered as the most autocratic period in the country's recent history, the regime was far from

[55] On the *Nippon Kaigi*, see C. Rose, *Patriotic Education in Japan*, in N. Shimazu (ed.), *Nationalisms in Japan*, London-New York, 2006, p. 139; J.E. Robertson, *Politics and Pitfalls of Japan Ethnography: Reflexivity, Responsibility, and Anthropological Ethics*, London-New York, 2009, p. 66.

[56] On this last issue, which acquires a particular relevance in Japanese politics and law because of controversial art. 9 of the postwar constitutional charter, see my article, F.L. Ramaioli, *Disarmo e riarmo nella Costituzione giapponese*, "Orientalia Parthenopea", XVI, Naples, 2016, pp. 101-134.

being structured as Europe's single party systems: on the contrary, political fragmentation was something highly recurrent even in those tormented years, with groups and factions contending for the primacy over the State. Nevertheless, a sense of ideal continuity permeates Japanese political society, constantly suspended between tradition and innovation, but in which it is always possible to identify some recurring elements and common traits.

In this article, I analyzed what I called the eternal continuity of Japanese politics based on three key concepts, which contribute to explain and contextualize it. The present analysis has been carried out without pretenses of completeness, provided that the dimension of continuity would deserve alone a dedicated monographic study both in the cultural and in the political field. However, these three points I have highlighted have to be regarded as extremely important to properly understand and to put in the right perspective a series of elements, choices and traits that are possible to observe in the country even nowadays.

The imperial institution provides a strong, stable and unitary framework within which to inscribe the particularities of Japanese politics, which acquires even the more importance the more it is actually detached from concrete politics. It is not only a symbol, as it is literally described by the constitution, and its role is not superimposable on the European monarchies. On the contrary, it embodies a line of continuity not just between present and past, but also between history and myth, establishing a narrative that cannot but pierce the veil of strict legal phraseology. The recent crowing of Emperor Naruhito, with its traditional ceremony of which some parts remain strictly private, clearly showed how the "heavenly ruler" is still to be considered not only the highest organ of the State, as it has been described after the Meiji Restoration. It is also the cultural cornerstone of the national architecture, which grants stability to a political system in which he does not take any active part. Amaterasu's regalia – the mirror, the sword and the jewel – are still handed over to the new Emperor, as a part of a ritual that bridges heaven and earth in a way that necessarily composes and unifies any possible political divergence to shape a sense of eternal continuity between ages and generations.

This sense of continuity has been mirrored by the idea of a "national essence" stemming through Japanese history, referred to

as *kokutai* in the years between the late Edo period and the end of the Second World War. In spite of its rather recent theorization, this quite complex and multifaceted concept points to an ideal dimension of eternity, in which the Rising Sun conjugates the exterior element of change, as for the practical organization of powers, with the continuity of its immutable spirit. Properly conceptualized during the Meiji era, the *kokutai* is both a product of its time and at the same time an ideal defining those years, overcoming political divisions to create a sense of unity out of a plurality. Although the references to the idea of *kokutai*, and to connected concepts like *Yamato-damashii*, progressively lessened with the occupation, their traces remain, hidden in the tension between what can change due to historical contingencies and the more profound layer of communitarian and ancestral belonging that actually defines the Japanese essence. Once again, this idea represents a ductile and flexible conception that help grasping the deep significance of an ethereal continuity in Japanese politics, which goes far beyond parties and currents.

Another reason for this may be found in recent Japanese history, with the above-mentioned SCAP policy of the reverse course. The emergence of the communist threat in the broader context of the Cold War and the rehabilitation of previously purged prewar politicians, bureaucrats and intellectuals actually prevented a deep fracture in the political system, and on the contrary granted a sense of continuity, however in the new framework of the established Japanese democracy. Once again, this continuity should not be referred to the exterior dimension of the shapes power assumes, but it regards the immaterial soul of Japanese politics, with the accrued sensibilities of past decades and, most of all, with the nuances of all those Japanese characteristics that hardly change with the passing of time. Political families and dynasties, deeply rooted in the country's political system, significantly contributed to grant a *continuum* in some aspects that still show a relevant influence on today's policies, up to Kishida's term. SCAP's reverse course, albeit a decision motivated by peculiar contingencies, is therefore something with long term consequences, shaping a political class based on the idea of an uninterrupted political and cultural consciousness, just like uninterrupted is the Yamato family which it serves.

Now more than ever, to properly understand Japan's future, it is necessary to recall its past, to comprehend the fractures it suffered in the last two centuries, and most of all to realize that, if something changes, there is still something beyond the reach of our eyes that hardly can, and that preserves the Rising Sun from a structural instability that had affected, in the past, the majority of the world's nations on the occasions of financial, political or social crises. The eternal continuity of Japanese politics is therefore not a void simulacrum, or a formal bow to millennial traditions, but on the contrary a sense of common belonging that overcomes the differences, just like a soul resists the changes of the body in its exteriority.

Japan and the Genesis of APEC: A Preliminary Study in the Light of Recently Declassified Documents

di Noemi Lanna

Abstract *– This paper aims to analyze Japan's role in the making of APEC. Drawing on recently declassified documents of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the article will investigate the historical conditions that encouraged the establishment of an inclusive organization committed to enhancing economic cooperation in the Asia-Pacific, focusing on Japan's strategic choices. While the present regional scenario is in many respects different from the 1980s, the case-study proposed could contribute to throwing light on the dilemmas confronting Japanese diplomacy today. In particular, the debate on APEC membership, the evolution of a Japan-Australia partnership, and the development of Tōkyō's policies in support of trade liberalization and open regionalism in the 1980s provide precious insights to better assess Japan's response to US-China tensions as well as Tōkyō's decisive contribution to multilateralism and trade liberalization in an increasingly contested Indo-Pacific.*

Introduction[1]

The 1957 edition of the Diplomatic bluebook presented the «three principles of Japanese foreign policy» (*Nihon gaikō no sangensoku*) as follows: assigning central importance to the United Nations; cooperating with the free world; strengthening Japan's position as «a member of Asia»[2]. Whereas the full recognition of Japan as a member of the Western bloc could be considered to have been achieved after gaining General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation

[1] In this article, the Japanese convention for the family name to precede the given name is followed.

[2] M. Iokibe (ed.), *The Diplomatic History of Postwar Japan,* London and New York, 2010, p. 66.

and Development) membership in 1955 and 1964 respectively as well as hosting the 1964 Olympics, political and economic re-integration in East Asia proved much more laborious. With the burdensome memory of the «Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere», the legacy of colonialism heavily impacted Japan's standing within the region, fostering a sense of suspicion and hostility. National division (in China and Korea), Cold War bipolarity (exacerbated by the outbreak of the Korean and Vietnam wars) and the fragmentation of the regional political economy (resulting not only from the confrontation between the USSR and US centered blocs, but also from the degrees of diversity existing within the blocs themselves) added further constraints to Tōkyō's diplomatic activity[3].

Despite this unfavorable background, Japan has been active in strengthening relations with East Asian countries in the postwar era, both at the bilateral and multilateral levels. Since the 1960s, Tōkyō has been at the forefront in proposing regional frameworks that could enhance intraregional cooperation, while consolidating its position in the region. An interesting case in point is Japan's contribution to the creation of APEC, the organization established in 1989 to broaden economic cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. Although Australia would assume the leadership in public, Japan's diplomatic efforts were decisive in the process leading to the establishment of the organization. The role of Japan in the creation of APEC has been extensively discussed in the literature[4]. However, it is worth reconsidering this case-study for a number of reasons.

[3] G. Hook, *et al.*, *Japan's International Relations. Politics, Economics and Security*, London and New York, third edition, 2011, pp. 159-166.

[4] See for instance, Y. Funabashi, *Asia Pacific Fusion: Japan's Role in APEC*, Washington, D.C, 1995; T. Kikuchi, *APEC*: *Ajia Taiheiyō mosaku*, Tōkyō, 1995; T. Terada, *The genesis of APEC: Australian-Japan political initiatives*, "Pacific Economic Papers" (Australia–Japan Research Centre, Asia Pacific School of Economics and Management, The Australian National University), no. 298 (December 1999), Canberra, http://hdl.handle.net/1885/40456 (Accessed on 14.4.2022); P. Korhonen, *Japan and Asia-Pacific Integration. Pacific Romances (1968-1996)*, London and New York, 1998; H. Patrick, *PECC, APEC, and East Asian Economic Cooperation: Prime Minister Ohira's Legacy and Issues in the 21st Century*, Discussion paper n. 38, APEC Study Center, Columbia University, 2005; M. Beeson, *Institutions of the Asia-Pacific: ASEAN, APEC and Beyond*, London and New York, 2008.

First, recently declassified documents from the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) offer new insights into the background surrounding Japan's involvement in establishing APEC[5]. Second, many of the issues at stake in the debate preceding the launch of the multilateral initiative – the threat of protectionism and the future of the liberal order; the Japan-Australia partnership; the role of China in the Asia-Pacific region– bear striking similarities to the questions associated with the current debate on regional order. Third, the scope and name itself of APEC call into question the issue of conceptualization of 'Asia-Pacific'. The definition of regions –where their boundaries lie, how they reconfigure in response to exogenous influences and changing power relations – is a recurring theme in institutional development. In the Asia-Pacific region, one of the main issues has been whether to take East Asia (excluding the United States) as a point of reference or to use the broader definition of Asia-Pacific[6]. This question was essential in the negotiations preceding the establishment of APEC, which became a locus for discussing the region's role, identity and constituent parts. In this respect, the debate on APEC membership is an illustrative antecedent of the debate emerging in recent years, regarding the definition of the Indo-Pacific region.

This article proceeds as follows. It first reviews the history of Japan's regionalist policy in order to describe the context in which the decision to sponsor the creation of an organization committed to institutionalizing economic cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region developed. It then surveys the main initiatives taken by Japan, shedding light on the policy-making processes behind them, through a close examination of recently declassified MOFA documents. Lastly, the paper draws some conclusions on the legacy of Japan's role in establishing APEC. Given the limited space, the article will present an introductory analysis of the main issues

[5] The documents were declassified on December 23, 2020. They consist of three folders: 2020-0558 (1988/10-1989/4), *Ajia Taiheiyō kyōryoku* 1; 2020-0559 (1989/1-1989/4), *Ajia Taiheiyō kyōryoku* 2; 2020-0560 (1989/11-1989/12) *APEC kakuryō kaigi (daiikkai)*. See, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/annai/honsho/shiryo/shozo/pdfs/2020/gaiyo.pdf (Accessed on 25.4.2022).

[6] J. Camilleri, *Regionalism in the New Asia-Pacific Order. The Political Economy of the Asia-Pacific Region, Volume II*, Cheltenham (UK), Northampton (USA), 2003, pp. 15-19; Beeson, pp. 4-9.

associated with Japan's role in the genesis of APEC, in the hope of paving the way for further research in the future.

From the «West Pacific Organization» proposal to Ōhira's initiative on the «Pacific Basin Cooperation»

Adopting a historical and evolutionary approach, it is possible to identify three main phases in Japan's postwar regionalist diplomacy[7]. The first phase – covering the twenty years from the early 1960s to the late 1970s – saw Japan retaking a proactive regionalist role, with the Ikeda and Satō administrations advancing several proposals. Japan's remarkable economic growth and decolonization in East Asia contributed to mitigating the constraints that had so far frustrated intraregional cooperation, as most notably shown by the foundation of the Asian Development Bank (ADB, 1966) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN, 1967). The second phase – marked by a distinct transpacific approach – was heralded by Prime Minister Ōhira's initiative on «Pacific Basin Cooperation» (1979) and culminated in the establishment of APEC (1989). As we will see, the rapid economic growth of East Asian economies and the emergence of more advanced forms of regionalism in other areas of the world played an important role in shaping Tōkyō's strategic choices at this stage. The third phase began in 1997 with the establishment of ASEAN Plus Three (APT). In a regional environment undermined by the Asian financial crisis – and, as far as Japan was concerned, the unprecedented effects of the «Lost decade» –, Tōkyō's regionalist diplomacy had to face challenges to the country's hitherto unrivaled economic leadership and the need to cope with the rise of a new concept of regionalism centered on East Asia.

The first phase saw significant advances in strengthening Japan's position as «a member of Asia», employing a forward-looking regionalist diplomacy, even though the efforts were not always

[7] A sketch of this periodization was presented in N. Lanna, *Dall'Asean al dibattito sulla East Asia Community. Vecchie e nuove mappe del regionalismo asiatico*, in F. Mazzei (ed.), *World Politics. Appunti e riflessioni sulla politica mondiale,* Napoli, 2010, pp. 244-258.

matched by tangible results. This was the case, for instance, of the proposal to set up a «West Pacific Organization», which eventually failed due to opposition from the US and Southeast Asian countries. It was then Prime Minister Ikeda, during his state tour in Asia in 1963, to take the initiative with the double aim of promoting regional economic cooperation and contributing to a peaceful solution of Konfrontasi, the military conflict pitting Indonesia against Malaysia between 1963 and 1966. As the name of the proposed organization suggested, the target area would cover not only Asia, but also Oceania with Australia and New Zealand, along with Japan, Indonesia and the Philippines as prospective founding members. The United States and the UK, at the time an influential player in Southeast Asia, were not considered for membership. Three years later, a similar fate awaited the «Asia-Pacific sphere» policy proposal, an initiative advanced by the then Foreign Minister Miki Takeo to foster the awareness of the shared destiny of Asian and Pacific countries. It would promote cooperation among the developed Pacific economies and contribute to the resolution of North–South problems in the Asia Pacific region. Despite its failure, in the long term, the «Asia-Pacific sphere» proved an important one since it created a new concept of «Asia-Pacific» in Japan's foreign policy as well as an initial opportunity to incorporate the concept of «open regionalism» into Japan's trade policy. Moreover, the initiative planted the seed for the Australia-Japan partnership which subsequently led to the establishment of APEC[8].

A good example of a successful Japan-sponsored initiative is the Ministerial Conference for Economic Development in Southeast Asia (MCEDSEA), a framework meant to promote development and cooperation in Southeast Asia. Albeit short-lived (1966-1975), this initiative was particularly significant as it was the first international conference to be launched by Japan

[8] T. Terada, *The origins of Japan's APEC policy: Foreign Minister Takeo Miki's Asia-Pacific policy and current implications*, "The Pacific Review", vol. 1, no 3 (2008), pp, 337-363; S. Hamanaka, *Asian Regionalism and Japan. The Politics of membership in Regional, Diplomatic and Trade Groups*, London and New York, 2010, Kindle edition, pp. 31-52.

and the first regional forum with Asian-only members[9]. In 1966, Japan took the lead in establishing the Asian Development Bank, while in 1968, Japanese economist Kojima Kiyoshi proposed the creation of the Pacific Trade and Development Conference (PAFTAD), a private driven institution designed to support the idea of a Pacific Free Trade Area. In 1977, the Japanese government took the initiative again, with the Japan-ASEAN summit, whose first meeting was held in 1977. This was complementary to the Fukuda Doctrine committing Japan to contribute to the peace and prosperity of Southeast Asia through stronger relations with the Southeast Asian countries based on «equal partnership» and «heart-to-heart» understanding[10]. The Fukuda Doctrine, the «Asia-Pacific sphere» policy proposal and MCEDSEA represented different sides of a regionalist diplomacy seeking to strengthen institutional development, while promoting Japan's overseas trade and commercial interests. As Japan came to establish itself as a global economic power in the 1980s, interest in enhancing intraregional cooperation and encouraging trade liberalization grew. Two important changes in the regional and international economic environment reinforced this trend: East Asia's rapid economic development and the emergence of threats to the GATT-based multilateral trading system.

Between 1965 and 1990 the East Asian economies grew faster than those of any other region in the world, contributing significantly to global growth. In particular, the Highly Performing Asian Economies (HPAES) – including Japan, the «four tigers» (Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and South Korea), and the three «Newly Industrializing Economies» Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand – grew roughly three times as fast as Latin America and South Asia, and five times faster than Sub-Saharan Africa[11]. This remarkable development, subsequently referred to as «East Asian miracle» by the World Bank, strengthened interdependence in the region, increasing the need for institutional cooperation channels.

[9] Participants to the first meeting included Japan, South Vietnam, the Philippines, Laos, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Cambodia attended as observers.

[10] Hamanaka, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-46; Beeson, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

[11] World Bank, *The East Asian Miracle: Economic Growth and Public Policy*, Oxford, 1993, p. 2.

Nevertheless, precisely when the East Asian economies were about to reap the benefits of their market-based development strategy – which combined strong export orientation, emphasis on the importation and utilization of foreign technology, rapidly growing investment and savings rates, and focusing on education and training –, changes in the regional and global economic environment posed new challenges to the open trading system underpinning the prosperity of the Asia-Pacific. The Single European Act (1986) and the US-Canada Free Trade Agreement (1988) foreshadowed the emergence of exclusive regional blocks, while the stand-off of the Uruguay Round added a supplementary source of anxiety for the region's economies[12].

These factors acted as a catalyst in the process of regional integration, reinforcing Japan's commitment to regionalist diplomacy. A decisive contribution came from Ōhira's initiative on the «Pacific Basin Cooperation» (1979). Ōhira was a key figure in the development of the concept of «Asia-Pacific» in Japan and a staunch supporter of Tōkyō's proactive role in establishing consultative arrangements on economic matters in the Asia-Pacific. In a policy paper presented in November 1978, a few weeks before taking office as Prime Minister, Ōhira explained his proposal regarding regionalism, stressing that it was time for Japan to be concerned not only about keeping good relations with the US and other countries in the world, but also about paying «special attention to countries in the Pacific region». He concluded that it was important for «pivotal regional States»[13] to prepare for regional cooperation and, after becoming Prime Minister, he established the «Pacific Basin Cooperation Study Group» (March 1979). The report released by the Study Group in May 1980 reiterated Ōhira's call to set up a regional organization, welcoming the transformation of the Pacific Ocean, long a barrier separating the countries of the region, into «an inland sea crossed by safe, free, and efficient transport lanes»[14]. Another important legacy of Ōhira's administra-

[12] Patrick, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8.

[13] Quoted in Hamanaka, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

[14] Naikaku kanbō (hen), *Kan-Taiheyō rentai no kōsō: Kan-Taiheyō rentai kenkyū guruupu*, Tōkyō, 1980, reproduced in GRIPS (National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies), "The World and Japan" Database, https://worldjpn.grips.ac.jp/documents/texts/APEC/19800519.O1J.html; for the English translation, see *Report on*

tion was the creation of PECC (the Pacific Economic Cooperation Conference), a partnership of senior individuals from business and industry, government, academic and other intellectual circles to discuss policy issues in the Asia-Pacific region. Although the Prime Minister passed away before its first meeting (September 1980), his efforts, along with those of Australia's Prime Minister Fraser, were essential for the initiative's success[15].

Ōhira's sudden death had an adverse impact on the advancement of the regionalist project. It was not before the second half of the 1980s that negotiations for creating an Asia-Pacific organization resumed. A major turning point occurred in 1988, when several significant proposals were advanced. In March, former Prime Minister Nakasone called for an «economic and cultural forum» in the Asia-Pacific. In July, through former Secretary of State Schultz, the US proposed the establishment of an intergovernmental forum for cooperation in the fields of education, communication, energy etc. Japan followed in September 1988, with another proposal, this time from Tamura Hajime, the head of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI)[16]. The idea was to bring together the ministries of trade and industry of the countries in the region to discuss matters of mutual concern. Finally, in December US senator Bill Bradley proposed the creation of a coalition of eight Pacific Rim countries[17].

Japan's initiatives following Hawke's announcement

The proposal to establish an inclusive organization committed to deepening regional integration and discussing issues of mutual concern in the Asia-Pacific was officially advanced by Australia's Prime Minister Hawke on January 31, 1989. The occasion was

the Pacific Basin Cooperation Concept, Y. Nagatomi (ed.), *Masayoshi Ohira's Proposal: To Evolve the Global Society*, Tōkyō, 1988, pp. 91-141, reproduced in GRIPS, https://worldjpn.grips.ac.jp/documents/texts/APEC/19800519.O1E.html.

[15] The meeting, which was held in Canberra, was attended by eleven economies (Australia, Canada, Indonesia, Malaysia, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and the United States) and three Pacific Island states (Papua New Guinea, Fiji and Tonga).

[16] Now Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI).

[17] Hamanaka, *op. cit.*, pp. 141-43.

a speech held at the Korean Business Associations luncheon in Seoul. Hawke stressed that Asia-Pacific was «the most dynamically growing region in the world», generating more than one third of the world's trade. He stated that the «open and non-discriminatory international trading system» played a major role in the development of the economies of the region. After a warning concerning the emergence of «serious cracks in the international trading system which have implications for the future health of both our region and the world economy», the Prime Minister reminded the audience that, since countries in the region were essentially interdependent, the time had come to increase «efforts towards building regional co-operation and seriously to investigate what areas it might focus on and what forms it might take». Unlike regional framework already in place such as PECC, the future organization would be more wide-ranging and, accordingly, more effective. This would improve the chances of success of the Uruguay Round and contribute to maintaining the GATT-based trading system[18].

While the United States had not been informed of the announcement[19], Japan was an important partner in Australia's initiative and contributed to its success through intense collaboration with the Australian Prime Minister's office and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. On February 9, 1989, Hawke wrote a letter to Japan's then Prime Minister Takeshita, enclosing a copy of the Seoul speech. The message expressed that Australia «wishes to initiate a process of consultation with your government and our other friends in the region on the desirability of more formal consultative arrangements on economic matters, and the form such arrangements might take formally». The details of the proposal were left for future discussion, but the letter clearly

[18] Speech by the Prime Minister, Luncheon of Korean Business Associations, *Regional Cooperation: Challenges for Korea and Australia*, Korea, 31.1.1989, retrieved at https://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/original/00007475.pdf (Accessed on 3.5.2022).

[19] As Terada notes, when Australia's Foreign Minister Gareth Evans visited the United States in March 1989, James Baker, Secretary of State, castigated him «for failing to consult the United States before the initiative was announced». Indeed, despite subsequent declarations released by the policymakers involved, records show that Australia's original proposal did not include the US. T. Terada, *The Genesis of APEC: Australian-Japan Political Initiatives*, p. 27.

specified that Hawke did not envisage «a regional trading bloc»[20]. Takeshita's response came one month later (March 9), presenting Japan's' position in five points. First, the Japanese Prime Minister concurred with Hawke that «all the members of the Asia-Pacific region share a fundamental interest in the open multilateral international trading system». For this reason, he continued, it was vital to make the utmost efforts for the success of the Uruguay Round and the maintenance and strengthening of the GATT system. Second, he agreed with his counterpart that the proposal launched in Seoul «should not be taken as aimed at a regional trading bloc»[21]. As for the problem of membership, Takeshita suggested that «no concept of Asia-Pacific cooperation can be implemented without the participation of the United States and Canada from the beginning, considering the indispensability of their contribution to the maintenance of peace and prosperity in this region». Special consideration was to be devoted to the countries in the region (and, in particular ASEAN countries), thus obtaining their consensus. Lastly, Takeshita concluded that it was important to be concerned about the «need for political consideration respecting the diversity of this region, in setting a framework for governmental consultation on Asia-Pacific cooperation». This was an implicit call not to take the OECD as a model, as its rigid organization was considered inadequate for the heterogeneous Asia-Pacific region[22].

Takeshita's reply to Hawke's letter was the result of a detailed discussion at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in February 1989 relating to the issues associated with Japan's involvement in setting up APEC. It is essential to take a close look at the key documents from the many briefings that preceded the drafting of Takeshita's reply: they provide precious insights into the policy-making process and, most notably, the divergence between MOFA and MITI regarding «the issue of Asia-Pacific cooperation» (*Ajia*

[20] Letter to Prime Minister Takeshita Noboru from Prime Minister R.J.L. Hawke, 9.2.1989, 2020-0558 (1988/10-1989/4), Ajia Taiheiyō kyōryoku 1.

[21] A confirm of Tōkyō's concern about avoiding the formation of a regional bloc comes also from the fact that domestic and international articles mentioning this eventuality were carefully collected and analyzed by MOFA officials. See, for instance, *Asia needs world, not a trading bloc*, "The Sydney Morning Herald", 31.1.1989, included in 2020-0559 (1989/1-1989/4), Ajia Taiheiyō kyōryoku 2.

[22] Letter to Prime Minister Hawke from Prime Minister Takeshita, 9.3.1989, 2020-0558 (1988/10-1989/4), Ajia Taiheiyō kyōryoku 1.

Taiheiyō kyōryoku mondai), as they called it. The five points listed in Takeshita's response reproduced an analogous list included in a document to be used as reference point for a briefing between MOFA officials and the Prime Minister. Presenting the opportunity to collaborate in the creation of an Asia-Pacific organization as a «historical necessity», the document mainly emphasized the risks associated with a diplomatic undertaking of this nature, and especially the «political implications» of APEC: the reaction of the USSR; the ASEAN countries' concerns about the initiative and Japan's role in it, and the impact on the relationship between the US and Japan[23]. What is more, the note ended with a call for prudence in handling issues regarding membership and leadership. MOFA officials were especially concerned about the potential negative consequences of Japanese leadership. It was also on this ground that they opposed MITI's proposal for a ministerial level conference involving the ministries of industry and trade of the region. MOFA reckoned that the organization should not be confined to industry and trade; instead, it should extend its scope to communications, transport, technology and the environment. Moreover, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs warned that bringing together the ministries of different countries, as suggested in MITI proposal, would make the membership of China, Taiwan, and possibly USSR extremely problematic. Not to mention Japan's leadership: if Tōkyō took the initiative, it was argued, other countries would react with mistrust and suspicion, perceiving the proposal as «something similar to the Co-prosperity Sphere»[24].

[23] On this point, it is also interesting to analyze the comments written by MOFA officials on articles published on Australian newspapers. A telling example is the big question mark running through part of an article vis-à-vis the following comment about Australia's position regarding the issue of US membership in APEC: «They [the countries of the region] are particularly concerned with the problem of how to handle with the US, which is believed to have asked why it has not been included as a potential member. Australia's answer is that while the US is not considered part of the region, and, therefore, has not been included, it is not being specifically excluded either». *PM makes running on Asia-Pacific trade forum*, "The Age", 22.2.1989, reproduced in 2020-0559 (1989/1-1989/4), Ajia Taiheiyō kyōryoku 2.

[24] See, *Ajia Taiheiyō kyōryoku mondai ni kan suru kihonteki kangaekata («Jikan no sōri burifuu yō shiryō"),* in 2020-0558 (1988/10-1989/4), Ajia Taiheiyō kyōryoku 1.

For its part, MITI was fully committed to supporting the creation of a regional organization dealing with policy issues of the Asia Pacific region. In light of its primary function – to promote Japan's overseas trade and commercial interests–, the Ministry considered as a priority to cultivate strong ties with the region's economies. All the more so at a time when US-Japan «trade frictions» (*bōeki masatsu*) were at their apex and the initiatives to mitigate them proved ineffective. As has been noted, it is reasonable to suppose that the Ministry attempted to obtain through multilateralism what it had failed to achieve by means of bilateral negotiations. Since the option of a US-Japan Free Trade Agreement had been abandoned and bilateral negotiations had become frustrating, there was one more incentive to bet on multilateralism and capitalize on the advantages resulting from US involvement in the regionalist project. After all, the US remained not only Japan's primary security provider and economic partner but was also an indispensable counterpart for other economies of the region that relied heavily on US markets for their exports.[25]

Hence, in February 1988, MITI set up «The Study Group on Asia Pacific Trade and Development» (*Ajia Taiheiyō bōeki kaihatsu kenkyūkai*). The interim report of the Study Group – released in 1988 and known as the «Sakamoto report», for Sakamoto Yoshio, then Director-General of the International Economic Affairs Department – suggested that the region's economic and trade structure should move from «development through US dependency» to «development through role-sharing cooperation in the region». It then stated that Japan was bound to play an important role in this transition, by expanding its imports and outward foreign direct investment, concluding with a call to create a new regional forum[26]. An English version of the «Sakamoto report» was sent to the US and other countries in the region. In October 1988, the activity of the Study Group was paralleled by that of the «Advisory panel for the promotion of cooperation in the Asia-Pacific». These efforts were matched by a diplomatic offensive both at home and abroad to consolidate support for the nascent APEC initiative.

[25] Hamanaka, *op. cit.*, pp. 142-43; Hook, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-16.
[26] Hamanaka, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

As declassified documents show, unlike MOFA, MITI was eager to appreciate the opportunities, rather than focus on the obstacles to institutionalizing cooperation in the region. The position of the Ministry for International Trade and Industry is well expressed in an April 1989 report. Presenting two sets of motivations, the document makes a case for Japan's proactive engagement in establishing an institution that would «effectively promote intergovernmental cooperation» in Asia-Pacific. The first reason for Japan to play a relevant role is related to Asia-Pacific's prolonged high-growth, characterized by the decisive role of intraregional trade and a high level of interdependence. This growth would continue in the future, transforming the region in a «pulling power» (*keninryoku*) in the global economy. This would benefit not only the economies of the region, but the world at large, with the expansion of supply, the growth in demand, technological innovation and other stimuli. The second circumstance MITI identified as evidencing the need for Japan's proactive engagement was the proliferation of focused proposals. As shown above, 1988 was a particularly fruitful year in this respect, paving the way for the launch of Hawke's proposal in January 1989. In such a favorable regional environment, given its leading economic status, Japan would have to do its part, making sure that the constituting organization focused on three main targets: expanding trade (e.g., the coordination of consultations in light of the Uruguay Round negotiations; the gradual reduction of trade barriers commensurate with economic strength; the promotion of intraregional trade); enhancing the investment environment, and addressing problems associated with high growth, such as energy security and environmental protection. In MITI's understanding, it was important for the organization to preserve a kind of «openness» (*kaihōsei*) that would contribute to the economic growth of the region and the entire world economy. The second point of concern was the «promotion of an incremental and multidimensional cooperation» (*tamentekina kyōryoku no zenshinteki suishin*), encouraging efforts to gradually coordinate initiatives in several fields such as the expansion of trade and energy security, as well as the promotion of investments, environmental protection and the like. Lastly, the report called for compliance with the principle of «mutual respect and equal participation» (*sogō*

sonchō oyobi byōdōna sanka)[27]. Japan's position regarding Hawke's announcement was made known to the general public through Japanese mass media. The Tōkyō Shinbun newspaper, for instance, published an article titled «Let's refrain from forming economic blocs. Takeshita's reply to Australia's Prime Minister. Let's include the US, Canada and China», in the morning edition of March 14, 1989. Albeit in a somewhat watered-down version, the article reproduced the main points of Takeshita's reply to Hawke's letter. The article explained that Japan's Prime Minister was committed to avoiding the forming of an exclusive economic bloc and was highly concerned about gaining the consensus of the countries in the region (especially ASEAN members). Also, Takeshita felt that the US and Canada should be among the founding members of the prospective organization, while China's membership should be taken into serious consideration. As for the USSR, it was suggested it have the status of «observer»[28].

In April, Japan's diplomatic activity entered a new phase. MOFA acknowledged the irreversibility of the process leading to the establishment of APEC, noting that «the chances that Hawke's proposal and MITI's proposal for a Ministerial conference will die a natural death are limited»[29]. Accordingly, the Ministry urged the government to intensify its efforts to obtain the approval of countries in the region, making the most of the meetings scheduled for the following months[30]. Hence, Takeshita's visit to the ASEAN countries (April 29-May 7) was an opportunity to publicly reaffirm the critical points of Japan's position: ASEAN views should be

[27] Tsūshō sangyōshō, *Ajia Taiheiyō kyōryoku suishin ni tsuite*, April 1989, in 2020-0559 (1989/1-1989/4), Ajia Taiheiyō kyōryoku 2.

[28] *Keizai burokkuka kaihi. Gō shushō ni Takeshita hensho. Bei, Ka, Chū o fukume*, "Tōkyō Shinbun", reproduced in 2020-0558 (1988/10-1989/4), Ajia Taiheiyō kyōryoku 1.

[29] *Ajia Taiheiyō kyōryoku mondai (kongo no torikumikata)*, 10.4.1989, in 2020-0559 (1989/1-1989/4), Ajia Taiheiyō kyōryoku 2.

[30] The meetings in question were the visit to Japan of Woolcott, the Secretary of Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, special envoy appointed by Hawke, scheduled for April 24-26; PECC's meeting in San Francisco (24-7 April); Takeshita's visit to ASEAN countries (April 29-May 7); ASEAN ministerial meeting in Brunei (July 6-8); PECC's plenary session in Wellington (November 12-5). *Ajia Taiheiyō kyōryoku mondai (kongo no torikumikata)*, April 10, 1989, in 2020-0559 (1989/1-1989/4), Ajia Taiheiyō kyōryoku 2.

respected in Asia Pacific economic cooperation; regional economic cooperation should contribute to the reinforcement and maintenance of an open free trade system; cooperation should include environment, transportation, telecommunication, and science and technology[31]. One month later, the official announcement of US participation in APEC (June 1989) definitively laid anxieties concerning the issue of US membership to rest[32].

Indeed, the organization established in November 1989 in Canberra well reflected Japan's views on Asia-Pacific cooperation. APEC was set up as a multilateral and inclusive forum, committed to open regionalism. Even though it was conceived as predominantly concerned with trade and economic issues, its cooperative action extended (and still extends) to other areas. As for the founding members, just as Japan had wished, these included US, Canada, ASEAN 6 as it was at the time, and Australia and New Zealand. China's membership was not ruled out, but was postponed until 1991, when People's Republic of China (PRC) joined, along with Hong Kong and «Chinese Taipei», as it was referred to, not to hurt the PRC's sensibilities. The structure of the organization, configured as a gathering of economies rather than of States, and the efforts of the key-actors involved in the process, South Korean foreign affairs officials in particular, made this result possible[33]. The dissolution of the Soviet Union neutralized MOFA's concern over the USSR's contribution in the organization. Russia would join APEC in 1998. As for possible adverse reactions to Japan's leadership, the Ministry's preoccupations proved disproportionate. The fact that Australia took the initiative in public – but also the substantial convergence on the need for greater economic cooperation from other Asia-Pacific economies – contributed to a successful outcome.

[31] T. Terada, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

[32] The announcement was made by US Secretary of State James Baker, on the occasion of a conference at the New York Asia Society. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

[33] Beeson, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

Conclusion

The drivers behind Japan's engagement in the making of APEC coincided in part with those inspiring Australia's initiative. As transpires from Hawke's speech in Seoul, given the stall of the Uruguay Round negotiations and the signing of the Single Act and US-Canada Free Trade Agreement, Australia feared that the GATT system could collapse and be replaced by exclusive regional trading blocs. Accordingly, it was deemed vital to establish a regional organization committed to strengthening the open trading system. At the same time, in Canberra's view, continuing to sustain the country's integration with the Asia-Pacific economies was the best option available. Indeed, given the growing economic importance of the Asia-Pacific region, the Hawke administration would introduce a policy based on «Asian engagement»[34].

Japan was equally concerned about hampering protectionist trends in the world economy and preventing the emergence of inward-looking regionalism. In addition, Tōkyō was even more determined than Canberra to make sure that the rapid growth of the economies in the region would continue and expand as much as possible. This was crucial for a global economic power and development model like Japan relying extensively on regional production networks. More importantly, as shown in the second section of this paper, Japan has had a high stake in regionalist diplomacy, since the 1960s. In light of this historical background, APEC can be understood as the continuation of the East Asia/Asia-Pacific-based initiatives carried on by Tōkyō in the first phase of its regionalist diplomacy. Unlike other proposals, it was successful, despite the many obstacles on the way. These problems were not only structurally associated with the creation of an organization like APEC, but there were also impediments specifically constraining Tōkyō's diplomatic action. First, Japan had to manage the risk of adverse reactions from ASEAN countries. In a risk-benefit assessment, a close and mutually beneficial relationship with Southeast Asian countries was of greater value than the possible advantages resulting from the establishment of an Asia-Pacific

[34] M. Beeson - Y. Hidetada, *Asia's Odd Men Out: Australia, Japan, and the Politics of Regionalism*, "International Relations of the Asia-Pacific", vol. 7 (2007), pp. 233-235.

organization. While MITI was flexible and optimistic in this regard, MOFA was rather uncompromising, as the declassified documents show. Second, US membership was a challenging issue. As we have seen, Japan maintained that US and Canada should be founding members of the organization. Nevertheless, making sure that this actually happened was no easy task. To start with, US-Japan trade conflicts increased US sensitivity to Japan's moves, considerably reducing room for maneuver. To make things worse, Australia was not particularly careful in the way it handled the issue of US membership. As we have seen, Canberra ended up irritating Washington, to the detriment of Tōkyō. Third, the problem of history further limited Japan's diplomatic efforts. In the end, MOFA's worries proved to be unfounded. The fact that Australia headed the initiative in public and Asia-Pacific economies' strong interest in enhancing economic cooperation in the region contributed to a successful outcome. Lastly, domestic agency complicated Japan's involvement in the process leading to the establishment of APEC. As shown above, MOFA and MITI held two irreconcilable positions on «the issue of Asia-Pacific cooperation». It could be said that they both had only a partial view of the story. MOFA was almost obsessed with the diplomatic costs of the undertaking (ASEAN countries' reactions; US objections; the history problem). MITI, on the other hand, focused exclusively on the benefits (hampering protectionism; capitalizing on the trend towards regional economic growth; finding another and more effective way to address US-Japan trade conflicts), downplaying other factors.

In the long run, Japan succeeded in overcoming the obstacles and contributed decisively to the establishment of APEC. Its strong interest in preserving the GATT-based multilateral trading system and consolidating the trend of Asia-Pacific's economic growth became predominant with respect to the concerns harbored by MOFA, especially in the first stages of the process. This outcome was perfectly consistent with the prioritization of economic activity (often referred to as economism)[35] that characterized Japanese diplomacy, especially during the Cold War years. At the same time, championing the cause of «open regionalism» – a guiding principle of Japan's regionalist policy– was indicative of the very

[35] Hook, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68.

positive value imputed to liberal order. In the 1980s, when negotiations leading to APEC began, the discourse on free and open trade was mainly one of pragmatism aiming to promote Japan's economic interests. In the post-Cold War environment, worries about «the emergence of protectionism, inward-looking trends and economic frictions» remained unchanged, as Japan's reaction to the US-China trade war of 2018–19 confirmed[36] Nevertheless, the emphasis on «rules-based economic order» acquired new meanings, becoming a normative and essential element of Japan's foreign policy. The «Arc of freedom and prosperity» – theorized by former Foreign Minister Asō Tarō, attaching importance to the values of democracy, freedom (including freedom of the seas), and the rule of law–, «Asia's democratic security diamond», launched by Abe in 2012, as well as the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) strategy with its emphasis on a «free and open order based on the rule of law», all signaled a shift to a «value diplomacy» (*kachi no gaikō)* with more normative connotations. At the same time, the introduction of these values in the foreign policy discourse was instrumental in drawing a line between the supporters of the international liberal order – most notably the vertices of the Diamond (Japan, Australia, India, United States) – and the actors representing a potential source of its destabilization, such as China[37].

The role of Japanese-Australian partnership in founding APEC was crucial. Without the endorsement of the region's most advanced economy and its intense diplomatic activity behind the scenes, Canberra would have failed to make Hawke's proposal come true. On the other hand, Tōkyō's economic power was not enough to carry on the challenging task of establishing an organization that would include many of the countries that had been under Japan's militaristic rule. Since 2007, the bilateral relationship

[36] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Diplomatic Bluebook 2021. Japanese Diplomacy and International Situation in 2020*, Tōkyō, p. 17.

[37] On the «Arc of freedom and prosperity», see Asō Tarō, *Jiyū to hanei no ko*, Gentōsha, Tōkyō, 2007; on Abe's «Asia's Democratic Security Diamond», see Abe Shinzō, *Asia's Democratic Security Diamond*, "Project Syndicate", 27.12.2012, https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/a-strategic-alliance-for-japan-and-india-by-shinzo-abe?barrier=accessreg. The author has presented these arguments in greater detail in *Le relationes nippo-indiennes dans l'ère de l'Indo-Pacifique,* "Outre-terre. Revue Européene de geopolitique", no. 54-55 (2018), pp. 273-281.

has been more than ever an important element of Japan's diplomacy, as confirmed by two initiatives essential in Tōkyō's strategic vision, namely the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue and FOIP. What has changed considerably is China's role in the regional architecture. In this respect, the debate on APEC membership is rather instructive. From Japan's point of view, US and Canadian membership was beyond discussion. As for China, documents show that Tōkyō considered its inclusion in the nascent organization particularly important. In a context characterized by Japan's unrivaled economic leadership, Australia's reorientation toward the Asia-Pacific and the significant role of US in the security and economy of the region, it was conceivable to envisage the regional space as an area centered on Asia-Pacific and premised on the strong bonds between the two sides of the Pacific Ocean. The situation appears somewhat different today. In a regional environment transformed by the rise of China, severely influenced by US-China confrontation and shaped by the emergence of alternative forms of regionalism (the East-Asia based APT, the ambitious Indo-Pacific vision, mega-FTAs like the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership), the conceptualization of the Asia-Pacific region underpinning APEC appears obsolete. Above all, the profound implications of the Ukraine crisis cast a dark shadow on the very sustainability of regional and international cooperation as we have known it in the last decades.

Tracing the Roots of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy: Anxiety and Opportunism in Foreign Policy Narrative Construction in Japan from the late 1970s to the mid-2000s

di Marco Zappa

Abstract *– In recent years, the Free and Open Indo-Pacific concept has gained popularity and created a new geographical reality, the Indo-Pacific. Despite its relatively successful performativity in this regard, this strategy, mostly aimed at containing China, originates in Japan's continuous sense of anxiety caused by the progressive end of Cold War strategic and ideological arrangements since the late 1970s. Clarifying the causes and modalities of recurring narrative changes since, based on previous studies on ontological security, this article seeks to contribute to the understanding of anxiety as a major driver of changes in Japan's self-representations. To this end, several previously announced grand strategies, such as Hashimoto Ryūtarō's "Eurasian" or "Silk Road" diplomacy and Ōhira Masayoshi's 1980 plan to establish a system of comprehensive security and create a Pacific Community, will be discussed. Based on official documents and biographical materials it will be showed that these ideas and policy proposals were in fact instances of Japanese leaders and policymakers' anxiety reduction strategies and attempts at building a national image against the backdrop of a transformed or rapidly transforming international environment at the end of the Cold War.*

Introduction

Since 2018, the concept of Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP, hereafter) has acquired popularity and power. The term is now widely used by mainstream media becoming increasingly "performative" insofar as it creates an entirely new geographic reality (the Indo-Pacific). Originally attributed to former Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzō, the concept has been adopted

officially by the United States Department of State as the primary scope of U.S. diplomacy and security[1].

It has been widely demonstrated that the FOIP stems out of a series of narratives, both Japanese and American, whose shared objective is that of reaffirming both Japan's and the U.S.'s role in Asia while countering or containing the People's Republic of China (PRC)'s assertiveness in the region[2]. Besides its clear security rationale, in the last decade, the FOIP also has provided the broader framework for Japan's geoeconomic strategy in the Asia-Pacific region, mostly based on demand-based aid provision, particularly in infrastructure development without ruling out, at least hypothetically, the possibility of coordinating with the PRC on several projects. This policy platform is theoretically open to any cooperation from other regional actors, including the PRC, but is ultimately aimed at securing Japanese companies' competitiveness and domestic economic growth[3]. Such narratives are "stories" which might be constructed by policymakers, experts, academics, and intellectuals and promoted by state leaders both domestically and abroad[4]. They are best described as "state self-representations" and usually based on arbitrary representations of the state's relations with the region within which it is situated, in a manner which is reflective of inherent power

[1] A. Blinken, *A Free and Open Indo-Pacific*, U.S. Department of State, 14.12.2021. https://www.state.gov/a-free-and-open-indo-pacific/ (Accessed on 26.9.2022).

[2] See for instance G. Pugliese, *Japan's Kissinger? Yachi Shōtarō: The State Behind the Curtain*. "Pacific Affairs", vol. 90 (2017), no. 2, pp. 231-251; Y. Hosoya, *FOIP 2.0: The Evolution of Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy*, "Asia-Pacific Review", vol. 26 (2019), no. 1, pp. 18-28.; R. Yamamoto, *Understanding Abe's Free and Open Indo-Pacific Vision Through Japan's Development Assistance*, "Issues and Insights", vol. 20 (2020), no. 1, pp. 7-11; A. Palit - S. Sano. *The United States' Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy: Challenges for India and Japan*, "ISAS Insights", no. 524 (2018), pp. 1-6; and W. Choong, William, *The Return of the Indo-Pacific Strategy: An Assessment*. "Australian Journal of International Affairs", vol. 73 (2019), no. 5, pp. 415-430.

[3] Yamamoto, *Understanding...*, cit., pp. 8-9; Hosoya, *FOIP 2.0*, p. 19.

[4] L. Hagström - K. Gustafsson, *Narrative Power: How Storytelling Shapes East Asian International Politics*, "Cambridge Review of International Affairs", vol. 32, no. 4 (2019), pp. 387-406.

structures, imaginative geographies or, as they will be called later, geonarratives[5].

In light of these facts, it might be worth addressing the following research questions: why have narratives changed? To what extent are they effective in guaranteeing ontological security? In this article, I will argue that the construction of FOIP-like geonarratives have emerged chronically whenever Japanese political leadership perceived an existential threat to some of its foundational values (ontological insecurity) due to changes in the international political environment. This trend has emerged particularly since the late 1970s, at a time when Cold War arrangements were already in crisis and bound to extinction. It is worth noting, however, that since the late 1970s Japanese geonarratives have changed periodically. If in the late 1970s and in 2010s, the focus has been on the Pacific, in the 1990s and 2000s Japan's "Eurasian connection" has been particularly highlighted in speeches and official documents[6].

Contrasting the successive Eurasian strategies of the 1990s and 2000s with Prime Minister Ōhira Masayoshi's 1979-1980 proposal of creating a "comprehensive security" system (*sōgō anzen hoshō*) entrenched in the creation of a Pacific Community (*kantaiheiyō rentai*), this paper will shed light on the historical origins of the current FOIP and on the phenomenon of narrative adjustment in Japanese foreign policy that can be observed since the late 1970s. The main hypothesis of this paper is that such periodical readjustment is the consequence of chronic "ontological insecurity"[7] arising from the sense of anxiety caused by the progressive demise of basic values constituting Japan's Cold War posture and the need to quickly readjust Japan's identity and self-representations to a transformed or transforming (possibly in the short run) international environment. In turn, this has

[5] J. Agnew, *Geopolitics: Re-Visioning World Politics*, London-New York, 2003.

[6] See for instance T. Dadabaev, '*Silk Road' as Foreign Policy Discourse: The Construction of Chinese, Japanese and Korean Engagement Strategies in Central Asia*, "Journal of Eurasian Studies", vol. 9 (2018), no. 1, pp. 30-41.

[7] J. Mitzen, *Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma*, "European Journal of International Relations", vol. 12 (2006), no. 3, pp. 341-370; K. Gustafsson - N. C. Krickel-Choi, *Returning to the Roots of Ontological Security: Insights from the Existentialist Anxiety Literature*, "European Journal of International Relations", vol. 26 (2020), no. 3, pp. 875-895.

pushed Japanese policymakers toward creative solutions enabling progressive narrative adjustments, which have, in certain cases, proved ephemeral. To better elucidate the argument, a close reading of speeches, official documents and recently published biographies of Japanese PMs have been taken into consideration.

Japan's strive for ontological security

Against this backdrop, key to attaining "ontological security", or, at least reducing "ontological insecurity", for any state is the adoption of a unifying narrative self-representation, which, in turn, is apt to constitute its identity in global politics, and results from a negotiating process between conflicting storylines[8]. Based on Hagström's studies on the relations between narrative power and ontological security, it can be argued that in recent decades, national governments, particularly in the so-called "great powers", have increasingly relied on the "construction and dissemination of narratives that strive for stability, consistency, and coherence."[9] These self-representations are best understood as a combination of narratives on the state's own strengths and weaknesses. These latter are interpreted, nonetheless, as reflections of a form of nationalistic narcissism promoted by the state's leadership rather than honest self-examination[10]. As it will be shown below, even governments in non-great powers, such as Japan, have periodically attempted at constructing grand "autobiographical narratives" based on, mostly, "pride", i.e., informed by the awareness of a loss of specific "tangible power resources" that can be compensated with other forms of influence (economic, intellectual or cultural, for instance)[11]. The AFP is a case in point. However, as pointed out by Agnew, such spatial representations, being pictorial as maps or narrative in nature, are not "passive", but rather "convey a strong message on behalf of a particular world-view", while "identifying and naming sites" based on a perceived "social and geopolitical

[8] Hagström, *Great Power Narcissism and Ontological (In)Security*; Hagström - Gustafsson, *Narrative Power*.

[9] Hagström, *Great Power Narcissism...*, cit., p. 332.

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] *Ibi*, p. 336.

significance"[12]. Therefore, FOIP-like "geonarratives" are not only based on a certain self-representation of the promoting actor, rather it interacts with a specific representation of the external world, i.e., an "imaginative geography", apt to make the very self-representation more coherent and effective.

As poignantly shown elsewhere, the rationale for the AFP was to change Japan's "overall international image", particularly the one of a mercantilist "free rider" in global affairs[13], thereby gaining status, respect and ultimately international acceptance in a post-Cold war era[14]. On the one hand, the fear of stigma, in fact, is a powerful driver of foreign policy making. To say it with Zarakol, who compared the dynamics of acceptance and exclusion in the international system with those of a suburb in Leicester, where sociologists Norbert Elias and John Scotson did their research in the 1960s,

> Stigmatization not only made the "outsiders" feel inferior, but also cut off their access to certain political, economic, and social privileges [...] far from corresponding to some kind of inherent, objective cause of relative inferiority, stigma labels often are themselves enough to generate inferior conditions, which are then mistaken as a cause[15].

Most relevant for the present discussion, however, is the literature on anxiety as a factor in determining ontological (in)security. It might be said, with Gustafsson and Krickel-Choi, for instance, that grand strategies such as the FOIP and, prior to it, the AFP, originate from a shared "anxiety" within Japan's ruling elite that the meaning of the state's existence is threatened in its essence. Anxiety can be triggered by external events or actors, or,

---

[12] Agnew, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

[13] K. Zakowski - B. Bochorodycz - M. Socha, *New Pillar of Japan's Foreign Policy: Arc of Freedom and Prosperity and Values-Oriented Diplomacy*, in K. Zakowski - B. Bochorodycz - M. Socha (ed), *Japan's Foreign Policy Making: Central Government Reforms, Decision-Making Processes, and Diplomacy, Cham*, 2018, p. 122; S. Islam, *Foreign Aid and Burdensharing: Is Japan Free Riding to a Coprosperity Sphere in Pacific Asia?*, in J. Frankel and M. Kahler (eds) *Regionalism and Rivalry: Japan and the United States in Pacific Asia*, Chicago, 1993, pp. 321-322.

[14] A. Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West*, Cambridge-New York, 2011, p. 12.

[15] Zarakol, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

most importantly, by one state's intrinsic and constitutive factors. Specifically, however, anxiety emerges when a key value to one's sense of self is threatened[16]. This condition, which is something "necessary" and integral to human life as it is caused by the "uncertainties of everyday life" can affect individuals, collective entities, and even historical periods. Therefore, precisely to cope with anxiety, states, much in the same guise as individuals, enact specific defense mechanisms[17]. Based on the work of existentialist psychologists such as Rollo May, Gustafsson and Krickel-Choi further stress the difference between "normal" and "neurotic" anxiety, both characterized as originating from a gap between one actor's expectations and the reality in which it lives, with the first, however, diverging from the latter in terms of the degree to which the external world is realistically appraised[18].

Imaginative geographies 2.0. From the "Indo-Pacific" to the "Silk Road"

As argued in the previous paragraph which surveyed the relevant literature on anxiety in IR, it might be concluded that when creative solutions to cope with anxiety do not help to fill the gap between reality and expectations, governments might run the risk of incurring in a "neurotic" anxiety leading to continuous narrative construction or update of previous grand narratives. Despite the rapid acceleration of the last two decades, this trend can be identified in Japanese foreign policy since the final phase of the Cold War in the late 1970s.

The construction of the "Indo-Pacific" narrative is often attributed to former Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzō who, during a 2007 during a state visit to India, stated the following.

> The Pacific and the Indian Oceans are now bringing about a dynamic coupling as seas of freedom and of prosperity. A "broader Asia" that broke away geographical boundaries is now beginning to take on a distinct form. Our two countries have the ability – and the responsibility – to ensure that it broadens yet

[16] Gustafsson - Krickel-Choi, *Returning to the Roots...*, cit., p. 888.
[17] *Ibi*, p. 887.
[18] *Ibi*, pp. 889-890.

> further and to nurture and enrich these seas to become seas of clearest transparence[19].

By uniting, at least rhetorically, the Pacific with the Indian Ocean, Abe declared his resolve to push forward Japan's ties with other large democracies in the wider Asia-Pacific region, particularly with India and Australia. In his 2006 political pamphlet, "A Beautiful Country" (*Utsukushii kuni e*), the late leader of the Liberal-Democratic Party (LDP)'s largest faction had argued for the enhancement of its country's ties with "emerging" economic powers like India, in terms of future trade, economic, energy and security collaboration opportunities. Particularly, he stressed the importance of enhancing his country's ties with "Japan-friendly democratic nations" (*shin-nichi minshushugi kokka*), with which it shared universal values such as democracy, rule of law and the respect of human rights, through minister-level summits and dialogues[20]. Consistent with these issues was Abe's call to pursue a proactive value-based grand strategy, labeled the "Arc of Freedom and Prosperity" (*jiyū to han'ei no ko*, AFP, hereafter)[21]. As stated in the 2007 Diplomatic Bluebook (DB), the main values Japan would promote were "freedom, democracy, fundamental human rights, the rule of law, and the market economy". Reinforcing its peaceful and non-interventionist approach to foreign policy and somehow distancing itself from the US' proactive regime change policies of the early 2000s, the 2007 DB stressed that Japan would maintain "a balance between political stability and economic prosperity and always giving full regard to each country's unique culture, history, and level of development"[22]. As shown in fig. 1, the geographical scope of the AFP embraces the entire Eurasian continent spanning from the Korean peninsula to Scandinavia, leaving out Southeast

[19] S. Abe, *Speech by H.E. Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan, at the Parliament of the Republic of India 'Confluence of the Two Seas, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan*, 22.8.2007. https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/pmv0708/speech-2.html, (Accessed on 26.9.2022).

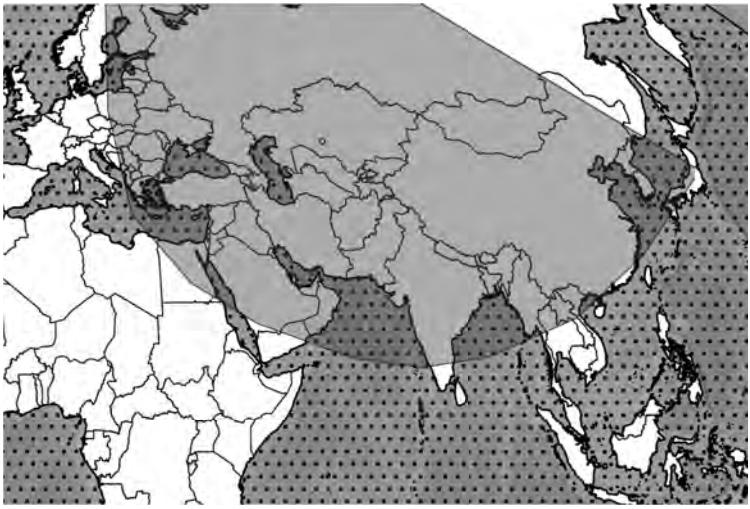
[20] S. Abe, *Atarashii kuni e [A New Country]*, Tōkyō, 2013, pp. 163-164.

[21] Abe, *Speech...*, cit.; T. Asō, *'Jiyū to Han'ei No Kō' o Tsukuru. Hirogaru Nihon Gaikō No Chihei [Building an Arc of Freedom and Prosperity: The Expanding Scope of Japan's Diplomacy]*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 30.11.2006, https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/press/enzetsu/18/easo_1130.html (Accessed on 26.9.2022).

[22] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Diplomatic Bluebook 2007*, Tōkyō, 2007.

Asia and Pacific nations like Australia and the US, while including South and Central Asia, the Caucasus, Turkey, portions of Eastern Europe and the Baltic, and Russia.

Fig. 1 – AFP's geography



Elaborated by the author with QGIS based on MOFA, Diplomatic Bluebook 2007, p. 2.

In hindsight, the AFP became the major political contribution of Asō Tarō, then Foreign Minister and, until very recently, a close associate of Abe within the LDP ranks[23]. However, the influence of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) bureaucrats like Kanehara Nobukatsu and Yachi Shōtarō, a key advisor to Abe and then first secretary of Japan's National Security Council, was evident[24]. The

[23] Currently the party Vice-President and influential power broker, Asō was Foreign Minister during Abe's first stint as Prime Minister in 2006-2007 and later served as Prime Minister between 2008 and 2009. More recently, he has been Minister of Finance and Vice-Prime Minister between 2012 and 2021, outliving Abe as he stayed in power during Suga Yoshihide's one-year premiership between August 2020 and October 2021.

[24] G. Pugliese, *Japan's Kissinger? Yachi Shōtarō: The State Behind the Curtain*, "Pacific Affairs" vol. 90 (2017), no. 2, pp. 241-242; Zakowski - Bochorodycz

AFP arguably had in fact a twofold aim. On the one hand, it was an attempt by the Japanese government at promoting a new image of Japan as a proactive global power and defender of universal values. On the other it could be read as a geopolitical strategy to contain China's increasing assertiveness in the East and South China Seas[25]. It aimed to do so by acting in partnership with other like-minded nations to promote free trade and investments and, concomitantly, by supporting developing countries in diverse areas such as healthcare, education, institution building and democratization through official development assistance (ODA)[26].

Despite its short-lived success, the AFP served as a grand narrative to re-position Japan in the post-9.11 world. The use of geonarrative strategies by Japanese leaders and policymakers is consistent with Japanese diplomatic strategies since the early postwar aimed at creating "stability" to promote regional economic development and "de-politicize" nationalist and postcolonial movements in Northeast and Southeast Asia[27]. Clearly, with the AFP, the Japanese government of the time attempted at reshaping Tōkyō's role in a changed international environment and, at the same time, project a new imaginative geography of Eurasia thus showing its commitment to the region. Furthermore, a long-term target of this strategy, one might argue, was to enhance Japan's partnership with the US and Western Europe while minimizing the impacts of Japan's relative decline in the face of the PRC's global ascent[28]. Apart from such contingencies, however, the AFP itself has an overlapping character with other grand geonarratives such as the "New Silk Road" launched in the mid-1990s by Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryūtarō. Hashimoto was the first Japanese leader after the end of the Cold War to propose a proactive Japanese engagement with former Soviet Union countries, establishing economic and polit-

- Socha, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

[25] C.W. Hughes, *Japan's Response to China's Rise: Regional Engagement, Global Containment, Dangers of Collision*, "International Affairs", vol. 85 (2009), no. 4, pp. 839-841.

[26] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *Diplomatic Bluebook 2007*.

[27] T. Miyagi, *Kaiyō kokka Nihon no sengoshi: Ajia henbō no kiseki o yomitoku [A Post-War History of Japan as a Sea Power: Reading Markers of Change in Asia]*, Extended edition, Tōkyō, 2017, ch. 1.

[28] Hughes, *op. cit.*, p. 855.; A. Oros, *Japan's Security Reinassance: New Policies and Politics for the Twenty-First Century*, New York, 2017, p. 8.

ical ties that could eventually grant Japanese companies access to the region's stock of natural resources[29].

In a July 1997 speech, the conservative leader redesigned Eurasian geography referring to the vast area comprised between the "Central Asian Republics" and the "Caucasus" as the "Silk Road region" evoking the "glorious" past of the trade routes which cut across Europe and Asia all the way to Western Japan[30]. At the narrative level, Hashimoto constructed Japan's engagement with several post-Soviet states (particularly Russia, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan) as a "Eurasian diplomacy from the Pacific" (*Taiheiyō kara mita yūrajia gaikō*) a phrase that clearly illustrates Japanese insularity and, at the same time, the need for Japan, as a resource-poor archipelago, to build ties with the continent. In fact, he also expressed his government's desire to build a bridge with Eurasia in the wake of the demise of the USSR by developing the supporting the democratization and free-market reforms in the new Central Asian Republics. Besides stressing their high hopes (*ōkina kitai o yoserarete iru*) toward Japan and Japan's "nostalgia-like" sentiment (*kyūshū ni nita kanjō*) for the region, Hashimoto vowed Japan's commitment to maintain peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific expressing a sense of anxiety caused by the potential failure of the international community to let post-Soviet states into the neoliberal world order. On top of this, following Tōgō's interpretation, in the mid-1990s, particularly after the 1996 Strait Crisis, the Japanese government seemed willing to "use" Russia to maintain a position of strength in the Asia-Pacific against the backdrop of an emerging US-PRC dualism[31]. Nevertheless, as argued by Uyama, Hashimoto's "Eurasian diplomacy" was not so much a new concept, but rather the "rearrangement" of existing guidelines in the attempt to make the international community aware of Japan's commitment to Central Asia economic and political development[32].

[29] Dadabaev, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

[30] J.A. Millward, *The Silk Road: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, 2013, p. 35.

[31] K. Tōgō, *Nihon no yūrajia gaikō (1997-2001) [Japan's Eurasian Diplomacy (1997-2001)]*, "nippon.com", 13.3.2014, https://www.nippon.com/ja/features/c00205/, (Accessed on 26.9.2022).

[32] Quoted in U. Mahmudov, *Reisengo Nihon no kyū-sōren shokoku ni taisuru gaikō seisaku: 'shien iinkai' kokusai kikan o chūshin ni [Japan's Post-Cold War Foreign Policy*

The 1970s as a decade of "anxiety": Ōhira's legacy

The above-mentioned existing guidelines can be found in two policy ideas (the "Pacific Community" and the "comprehensive security strategy") attributed to Ōhira Masayoshi, Prime Minister of Japan between 1978 and 1980. Since the early 1960s, well prior to becoming leader of the executive, Ōhira had served in various cabinet positions, including Chief Cabinet Secretary, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of International Trade and Industry and Minister of Finance under three PMs, Ikeda Hayato, Satō Eisaku and Tanaka Kakuei and rose to become one of the major party power brokers since the birth of the LDP in 1955, displaying considerable skills in foreign policy making[33]. Throughout his long public service career, he had visited the US, Europe and dedicated himself to the normalization of the ties with South Korea in the early 1960s (in alleged conflict with then PM Ikeda's will to prioritize the normalization of ties with the People's Republic of China, PRC) and with the PRC since the early 1970s. He developed a strong friendship with the US ambassador Edwin O. Reischauer (1961-1966) becoming known as one of the most US-friendly LDP politicians of his generation[34] and, more broadly, his agency has been crucial in Japan's quest for stability in Asia in the early stages of the Cold War[35].

In the mid-1960s, shortly after losing his first son, Masaki, to a rare disease, Ōhira developed his own original perspective on diplomacy and foreign policy making. He voiced it during a speech in early 1966 at the LDP headquarters in Tōkyō in his capacity as vice-chairperson of the research group on foreign affairs of the policy research council (*seimu chōsa kai*). According to his view, a country without a stable domestic governance, could not implement an excellent (*mamareta*) diplomacy. Particularly, he argued for a more holistic approach to policy making both at home and internationally, adopting a "wider perspective", particularly on

Toward the Former Soviet Republics: A Study on the International "Aid Committee"], "Review of Law and Political Sciences", vol. 117 (2020), no. 3-4, p. 68.

[33] H.D.P. Envall, *Japanese Diplomacy: The Role of Leadership*. Albany, 2014, pp. 88-91.

[34] R. Hattori, *Ōhira Masayoshi rinen to gaikō [Ōhira Masayoshi: Ideas and Foreign Policy]*, Tōkyō, 2019, pp. 61-63.

[35] Miyagi, *op. cit.*, ch. 1; Envall, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

security issues. "There is no such thing as absolute security (*zettai na anzen hoshō*), as nothing can be absolute", he is quoted as saying, adding that the 1952 US-Japan security treaty covered only "one aspect of security, and moreover a complementary one"[36]. Implicitly, Ōhira referred to a strife within the LDP between his and then PM Satō Eisaku's factions. Among the other consequences, this confrontation caused the cooling of Japan-PRC relations, against the backdrop of the 1965 US military escalation in Vietnam and conclusion of the Japan-Republic of Korea (ROK) Treaty on Basic Relations, which left Beijing authorities wondering of an emerging US-supported Japan-ROK-Taiwan front against the PRC[37].

After a stint as chief of the influential Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), supervising the country's strategy for energy and raw material supply and technological industries nurturing, in 1972, Ōhira took once again the post of FM, upon his friend and ally Tanaka Kakuei's election as LDP president and PM. Just two years before, in an article published by a local bank magazine, he had maintained that "Japan's catch-up phase with the West was over" and that it was time for the country to move on to a new phase of "creative development" (*sōzō teki hatten e no shikō)*[38]. Though he referred to the need for Japanese businesses to take steps to increase their global competitiveness, his future-oriented approach would emerge clear in his considerations on foreign affairs. Specifically, after the 1971 Nixon shock, the Japanese government found itself in dramatically changed international environment characterized by the US-PRC rapprochement and the recognition of the PRC as the sole legal representative of China to the UN instead of the Republic of China (ROC) which had been a founding member of the organization in 1945, and, as consequence, by ROC's replacement in the Security Council. On one occasion shortly after these events, Ōhira spoke of a way in which the Japanese government could cope with the "anxiety" caused by rapid and unpredictable shifts in the international system, that is, enhancing a "self-reliant diplomacy" (*jishu gaikō*). Ōhira added

[36] Hattori, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

[37] D. Yasutomo, *Sato's China Policy, 1964-1966*, "Asian Survey", vol. 17 (1977), no. 6, pp. 537-538.

[38] Hattori, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

that Japan's overt reliance on the US ally had prevented Japan from actively participating in international politics. A new "vigorous deployment" (*seiryokuteki tenkai*) of Japan's diplomatic resources was timely now that the "dollar system" had weakened. Concomitantly it was necessary to "settle the accounts" (*sōkessan*) with the country's wartime legacy[39].

Japan's new diplomacy

In an essay called "Japan's new diplomacy" (*Nihon no atarashii gaikō*), which sharply criticized Satō and his cabinet, Ōhira highlighted the urgency to speed up the negotiations for Japan-PRC ties normalization. Once again, the precondition for a successful diplomacy was a radical domestic transformation, in terms of enhancing the populace's living conditions, rebuilding trust between citizens and politicians and rediscovering "human cooperation" (*ningen rentai no kaifuku*) as opposed to the dominant individualism and materialism of the era of sustained economic growth[40]. In fact, he characterized Japan as a "maritime nation" in Asia (*Ajia ni ichi suru kaiyō kokka*), with a territory too narrow for the large population who inhabited it. Furthermore, Ōhira stressed the fact that Japan was resource-poor and heavily dependent on imports of energy and raw materials and on overseas market to sustain its manufacturing economy. Therefore, Japan's survival (*seizon*) and prosperity (*han'ei*) on top of its security (*anzen*) and prestige (*meiyo*) depended on the stability of the seas surrounding Japan itself. For Ōhira, locating Japan in Asia meant, in fact, that any government should be aware of the region's historical instability (*antei o kaki*) and poverty (*hinkon de mo aru*) and should therefore contribute to the region stabilization[41].

To this end, and in preparation of his coming forward as candidate to the LDP presidency, in May 1972, he further laid out five principles for a "peace diplomacy" (*heiwa gaikō go gensoku)* that were to become integral in Japan's "new diplomacy". First, nuclear attacks and nuclear proliferation will not be tolerated; second,

[39] *Ibi*, p. 107.
[40] *Ibi*, pp. 107-8.
[41] *Ibi*, p. 109.

Japan will oppose any violations of the sovereignty of one nation; third, it will not support any international conflicts; fourth, Japan will not tolerate sea, air and water pollution and excessive depletion of natural resources; fifth, Japan will not tolerate the neglect of world hunger and epidemic diseases. Clearly, these pledges, particularly the first three, were first and foremost aimed at the PRC and would serve as the premises for FM Ōhira's diplomatic work toward the normalization of Japan-PRC ties[42]. At the same time, by highlighting Japan's diplomatic passivity, Ōhira seemed to recognize the self-inflicted nature of the 1971 Nixon shock and blamed it on former PM Satō's pro-Taiwan posture against this backdrop, it is worth noting that as a member of the relatively pro-PRC LDP faction, the Kōchikai, established by Ikeda Hayato in the 1960s and led, among the others, by Tanaka, Ōhira did not see Beijing as a "threat" nor as a strategic rival as it would become in later decades.

Ōhira sense of "anxiety" for Japan's future emerged clearly in 1973. In August that year, he was confronted with the abduction of former South Korean democratic presidential candidate Kim Taejung from a hotel in Tōkyō which quickly escalated into a foreign policy issue given that the act, being carried out by agents of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA), could be read as a violation of Japanese national sovereignty. The event destabilized Ōhira's effort in stabilizing Japan-ROK relations, which had been going on since his first term as FM in the early and mid-1960s. The "Kim incident" embarrassed the Tanaka cabinet to the point that it became difficult, particularly for the FM, to defend the

[42] *Ibi*, p. 110. Particularly, the reference to nuclear weapons and nuclear proliferation was intended to reassure China on the presence of nuclear weapons in Japanese territory, a contentious issue within the Japanese political landscape and within the very LDP particularly after the existence of a secret agreement between Tōkyō and US on the "introduction" of nuclear weapons on Japanese national territory, excluding, however, Japanese ports was revealed in the 2000s. S. Shinbun Akahata. *Kyōsantō Ga Akiraka Ni Shita Nichibei Kaku Mitsuyaku. Rekidai Gaimujikan No Shōgen de Urazuke. Konpon Naku Hitei No Nihonseifu [The secret nuclear agreement unveiled by the Communist Party – A former diplomat's testimony offers new details – The government denies involvment, but offers no evidence]*, "Shinbun Akahata", 22.6.2009, https://www.jcp.or.jp/akahata/aik09/2009-06-22/2009062201_03_1.html, (Accessed on 26.9.2022). Hattori, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-71.

need to maintain peaceful relations with the ROK in the face of public criticism[43]. The start of the fourth Arab-Israeli war only a few month later in October 1973 triggered the first oil crisis, which severely affected Japan's and other industrialized economies in Western Europe. In the early 1970s, Japan's industrial complex depended upon oil bought from the Middle Eastern producers for the 80% of its total oil imports[44]. At a conference in Washington in early 1974, Ōhira maintained that because of the oil crisis, countries had come together as an attempt to build "one world united as a global community" (*gurōbaru kyōdōtai taru 'hitotsu no sekai*). His proactive stance, allegedly, even won him the praise of US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger[45]. Despite the Japanese government's resolve to reduce its dependence from the oil of the region, as a form of soft retaliation against oil producing countries (OPEC), Japan's diplomatic efforts had ultimately no effect on the resolution of the conflict in the Middle East[46].

These historical contingencies, combined with other unsettling events such as the US withdrawal from Vietnam after the fall of Saigon in 1975[47], nevertheless, accelerated the of Ōhira's elaboration of a comprehensive narrative strategy. The end of the Vietnam war and further congressional legislation putting restraints on US military involvement abroad had in fact raised fears in Tōkyō of a massive US pullout from Asia and hampered Washington's credibility in the face of its East Asian partners[48].

In 1977, a year into his new position as LDP Secretary general, he published a political pamphlet entitled "Rough notes on Worldly Affairs" (*Fūjin zasso*) which included key elements of Ōhira's worldview and perspective on Japan's position in world

[43] Interestingly, the issue was shelved in November upon a state visit by South Korean President Pak Chonghui and Prime Minister Kim Chongp'il in November 1973. The following month, during a bilateral cabinet-level meeting, Japan pledged a new aid package to Seoul. *Ibi*, pp. 128-29.

[44] *Ibi*, p. 135.

[45] *Ibi*, p. 136.

[46] T. Akaha, *Japan's Comprehensive Security Policy: A New East Asian Environment*, "Asian Survey", vol. 31 (1991), no. 4, p. 325.

[47] Miyagi, *op. cit.*, ch. 4; Akaha, *op. cit.*, p. 326.

[48] V. Cha, *Abandonment, Entrapment, and Neoclassical Realism in Asia: The United States, Japan, and Korea*, "International Studies Quarterly", vol. 44 (2000), no. 2 , pp. 279-80.

affairs. Particularly, he stressed the persistent presence of the "shadows of postwar" (*sengo no kage*) and of a widespread sense of guilt and awareness of Imperial Japan's war crimes (*zaiaku ishiki*). From a policy making perspective, he argued, the wartime legacy has been both a blessing and a curse as they allowed for cautious and "easier" solutions in terms of foreign policy, i.e., relying on the US. "Today – wrote Ōhira – there is a strong need for advancing the reconstruction of our country's individual autonomy (*koseiteki na shutaisei*) through proactive participation in the planning of the international order (*kokusai chitsujo e no sankaku*)". Moreover, the LDP Secretary General expressed his will to bring back Japan (*kaifuku shitai*) to a position of constituent member of the international order, whose position is acknowledged by the other members of the (US-led) international society in terms of (good) reputation (*meijitsu*) and prestige (*meiyo*)[49].

Slave to the postwar narrative? Ōhira's conservative reformism

The above-mentioned ideas, combined with Ōhira's own desire to overcome materialism by investing in culture and education, were finally incorporated in the "comprehensive security" (*sōgō anzen hoshō*) strategy at the end of 1978. In November that year, Ōhira was finally elected at the LDP presidency and in December successfully formed his first cabinet. In the wake of the second oil crisis, Ōhira's priority was naturally to secure resources and markets for Japanese industries. This economic rationale could not however be possibly detached from a genuinely security rationale. As argued by Envall, the period beginning in January 1979 was characterized by a sense of anxiety involving Japan's policy makers as well as in the public at large[50]. Contributing factors were both domestic and external. First, the limits of the growth strategies adopted in the mid-1970s became manifest as inflation rose because of the second oil shock. Second, one has to consider that factors like the Iranian revolution of January 1979, the political cause of the 1979 oil crisis, border clashes between Vietnam, China and Cambodia of March, worsening Japan-USSR ties, the Vietnamese refugee

[49] Hattori, *op. cit.*, pp. 162-163.
[50] Envall, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

crisis, and US-Japan trade frictions heavily affected the sense of "ontological insecurity" within a rapidly transforming international environment anticipating post-Cold War era arrangements[51].

Therefore, given Japan's vulnerability potentially to "any small conflict" around the world, Ōhira maintained the need to constitute a collective security architecture by increasing state investments in Japan's defense capabilities, economic cooperation and by strengthening the Japan-US alliance. As summarized by Akaha, the comprehensive security strategy entailed (a) enhanced capabilities of self-help and self-defense; (b) efforts to make the whole international system more secure, and therefore, contribute to Japan's own security; (c) strengthened ties with regional partners to promote stability and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region[52]. On top of this, Ōhira pledged to strengthen the government's efforts with regards to educational and cultural diplomacy and ordered the creation of special task forces bringing together researchers, experts, university professors and state bureaucrats to support the LDP and the government with ad hoc policy advice[53].

Closely linked to the Ōhira's security strategy was the idea of a Pacific Community (kan-*taiheiyō rentai kōsō*). To some extent, Ōhira defended Japan's dominant position in the region, by comparing the country to other powers such as the US, West Germany and the European Community towards Latin America, Europe and Africa, respectively. However, as the US paid special consideration (*tokubetsu no hairyō o harau*) to the countries in Central and South America, West Germany to the European Community, the European Community, in turn, to Africa, he maintained that Japan's diplomacy should naturally adopt a similar approach towards Pacific countries. Upon their development, in fact, depended "the world's development (*sekai no hatten*)"[54].

Ōhira went further by stating the following:

> Needless to say, making proactive diplomatic efforts to build a peaceful international environment is essential [...] Japan's interdependence with the nations of the Pacific like the US,

[51] *Ibi*, pp. 96-97.
[52] Akaha, *op. cit.*, p. 325.
[53] Hattori, *op. cit.*, p. 172.
[54] *Ibi*, p. 170.

> Canada, Australia and New Zealand and our friendly ties with Central and South America are growing stronger and stronger[55].

Particularly, Ōhira appointed long-time economist and diplomat Ōkita Saburō as the Pacific Community Group chair. Heavily influenced by economist Akamatsu Kaname's "flying geese" paradigm and advocate of Japan's primacy in East Asia, Ōkita had been a supporter of comprehensive security through economic means, specifically ODA, since the 1950s, contributing to shaping Japan's overall diplomatic approach in the postwar[56]. It is not surprising then that in 1980, Ōhira and Ōkita inaugurated the Pacific Economic Cooperation Conference (PECC), a non-governmental economic summit platform, with Autralian PM Malcolm Fraser whom Ōhira had introduced to his Pacific Community idea at a summit meeting in Canberra in January 1980, a few months before his death in June that year[57].

Conclusion

Despite his less than 2 year-long stint as PM, during his long career as LDP powerbroker and public servant, Ōhira Masayoshi has been one of the most influential political figures in postwar Japan, who has contributed to greatly reshaping the narrative framework of Japan's foreign policy and the country's actual security policies. His guidelines, particularly, the comprehensive security and Pacific Community ideas have been so influential as to clearly inspire the definition of subsequent foreign policy grand narratives until recently (i.e., the FOIP).

In the above paragraphs, we have shown how Japanese governments' grand narratives on foreign policy have been relentlessly characterized by the quest for peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region to make up for policymakers' and citizens' growing sense of "anxiety" in a perceivably "unstable" or "dangerous" international

[55] *Ibi*, p. 174.

[56] P. Katzenstein, *Regionalism and Asia,* in S. Breslin (ed) *New Regionalism in the Global Political Economy: Theories and Cases*, London-New York, 2002, pp. 104-105. P. Korhonen, *The Theory of the Flying Geese Pattern of Development and Its Interpretations*, "Journal of Peace Research", vol. 31 (1994), no. 1, p. 105.

[57] Hattori, *op. cit.*, p. 192; Katzenstein, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

environment. The construction of such narratives, several of which are based on hierarchical imaginative geographies, as shown above, has consistently been a way for Japan's policymaking élites to reaffirm and adjust Japan's position in the international environment amidst the demise of Cold war arrangements since the late 1970s. A few issues raised in previous paragraphs deserve to be recalled in this concluding paragraph.

First, we have highlighted a continuity and relative consistency of narrative construction since the late 1970s as a response to the normalization of "anxiety" in Japanese foreign policy. If in the late 1970s, under Ōhira's leadership, the focus of the Japanese government official narrative was the Pacific, particularly in the 1990s and 2000s, in the wake of the fall of the Soviet Union and of the 2-decade long US engagement in Afghanistan, Japanese policymakers have gradually reoriented the focus of their action toward Russia and Central Asia and, later, with the launch of the AFP, toward a wider region comprising South Asia, the Caucasus, Eastern and Northern Europe. To some extent, the launch of the FOIP as a Japanese American grand narrative which has contributed to creating a new geographic "reality" in recent years, has again turned the clock back to Ōhira's original plan of creating a Pacific Community including important economic and security partners such as Australia.

Second, we pointed at periodical readjustments of the dominant narratives as symptoms of a relentless anxiety and possible future "neuroticization" of such anxiety caused by the growing difficulty to predict transformations and changes in the international environment. Anxiety could not be related only to threats posed by rivals but also to perceived friencs and partners. To further elaborate, contrary to the recent FOIP, a PRC-containment drive could not be noticed in Ōhira's foreign policy proposals. Ōhira, as a member of the Kōchikai, a moderate faction within the LDP, and close associate and friend of PM Tanaka Kakuei in the early 1970s, was a key figure in the process of Japan-PRC normalization and did not probably perceive the PRC as an actor that could enhance his country's sense of "anxiety". The same could not be said with regards to the USSR, in the face of which not even Ōhira's proactive diplomatic stance succeeded in completely normalizing ties, or to the US. In this regard, it might be worth noting that

despite the foundational character of the US-Japan alliance in defining Japan's foreign policy priorities, US' attitude toward Japan has repeatedly been a source of "anxiety" for Japanese leaders and policymakers since the late 1970s. At the same time, the opportunistic character of such "anxiety" reducing strategies emerges clear from the rekindling of subsequent geonarratives.

Third, we noticed the persistence of hierarchies and hierarchical thinking in anxiety reducing narrative strategies. Interestingly, similarly to the flying geese paradigm that inspired one of Ōhira's closest associate, Ōkita Saburō, hierarchies appear to be embedded in the process of strategic narrative formulation. This process can be observed both in the Pacific and Eurasian strategies as shown above. Particularly in the first, in fact, despite their vows to be a "maritime Pacific nation", Japanese (and more recently US) policymakers and diplomats have rarely included Pacific island nations such as Papua New Guinea, or Kiribati and Micronesia, in their strategic narratives, as partners but rather as recipients of their generosity[58] or areas of neocolonial interests. The case of Papua, whose government along with regional organizations and partners, have long struggled to prevent tuna stock depletion in their territorial waters caused by excessive activity from foreign fishing fleets particularly Japanese is telling[59]. Once again with Agnew, spatial representations are conceived to arbitrarily enhance certain self-representations of the map promoter rather than promoting equality and objectivity.

[58] Blinken, *op. cit.*; Jiji, *Japan, Papua New Guinea Aim for Free, Open Indo-Pacific,* "nippon.com", 21.8.2020, https://www.nippon.com/en/news/yjj2020082100863/, (Accessed on 26.9.2022).

[59] R. Kuk - J. Tioti, *Fisheries Policy and Management in Papua New Guinea*, "NRI Special Publication", no. 64 (2012). Bloomberg News, *Pacific Nations Ban Tuna Boats to Stop Stock Collapse*, "Los Angeles Times", 19.6.2008, http://www.seaaroundus.org/newspapers/2008/LosAngelesTimes_PacificnationsBanTunaBoatsToStopStockCollapse.pdf, (Accessed 26.9.2022).

Strengthening Ties at its Southern Flank: Japan's Relations with Southeast Asia and Philippines from the «Takeshita doctrine» to the Hashimoto Government, 1987-1998

di Raimondo Neironi

Abstract *– Japan has been regarded Southeast Asia as a vital region for its diplomatic and economic interests since almost the late 1930s. Although its diplomatic efforts to build – on a new basis – the relationship with Southeast Asia, and particularly with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), dated back to the late 1970s, as of December 1987 Takeshita Noboru's cabinet took great pains to reinforce the economic ties and to initiate political coordination between Japan and the Association. What ensued was an ever-growing form of co-operation affecting diplomacy, culture, trade, and infrastructure projects. The development of Japan-Philippines relations epitomised this new flourishing approach. The bilateral connection with the Philippines as of 1986, until the 1998 at least, demonstrated how much important was for Japan to keep good neighbourhood policy strong at its southern flank. The aim of this paper is twofold: on the one hand, it examines the evolution of Japan-ASEAN/Southeast Asia relations within the space of almost a decade, from the enunciation of the «Takeshita doctrine» to the Hashimoto Ryūtarō's government. On the other, it traces Japan's path towards the enhancement of relationship with the Philippines from the fall of Ferdinand Marcos' regime until the Fidel V. Ramos administration. This paper argues that Tōkyō contributed decisively both to the process of democratisation in the Philippines and to the development of the southern region of Mindanao.*

Introduction

Japan has regarded Southeast Asia as a vital region for its diplomatic and economic interests since the late 1930s[1]. Directly after the

[1] See for example, G. Huff, *World War II and Southeast Asia: Economy and Society under Japanese Occupation*, Cambridge, 2020; J.A. Yellen, *The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere: When Total Empire Met Total War*; Ithaca, London, 2019; T.

ruinous capitulation to the Allied forces in September 1945, the American-led occupation government came to believe that natural resources from this area might revitalise Japan's economy and resume the bilateral trade system between East and Southeast Asia. This assumption dovetailed with the political event occurring at the early October 1949, at a time when Mao Zedong proclaimed the establishment of a Communist government in China. Since then, John Foster Dulles and the US Department of State affirmed Japan's attempt to increase trade with Southeast Asia «might, to some extent, offset the loss of [its] traditional trading area in China and Manchuria». Moreover, they cannot ignore the possibility that Southeast Asia might also be fallen to Communist threat «with consequent grave effect on Japan's economic position»[2]. Hence, the fundamental lesson United States (US) was meant to have learned from the post-WWII period was that just a stable and peaceful co-operation with the region would make Japan a complete success as a democratic and capitalist stronghold in Asia.

The most important Southeast Asian countries that entwined its destiny with Japan was undoubtedly the Philippines. Tōkyō and Manila have taken part of the «hub-and-spokes system» since the 1950s: this exclusive[3] security architecture consisted of a string of defence pacts that Washington signed with Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and the Philippines bilaterally, and a trilateral security arrangement with Australia and New Zealand. Despite the repeated attempts of the US to formalise a «Pacific Ocean Pact»[4]

Miyagi, *Japan's Quest for Stability in Southeast Asia: Navigating the Turning Points in Postwar Asia*, Abingdon – New York, 2018; N. Satoshi, *Japan's Colonial Moment in Southeast Asia, 1942-1945: The Occupiers Experience*, Abingdon - New York, 2012; S. Hajime, "Southeast Asia as a Regional Concept in Modern Japan", in H.G.C. Schulte Nordholt - R. Raben, *Locating Southeast Asia: Geographies of Knowledge and Politics of Space*, Leiden, 2005, pp. 82-112; N. Tarling, *A Sudden Rampage: The Japanese Occupation of Southeast Asia, 1941-1945*, Honolulu, 2001.

[2] Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), Memorandum of Conversation by the Special Assistant to the Consultant, Allison, 12.1.1951, Asia and the Pacific, 1951, vol. VI, part 1, document 472.

[3] M. Dian - H. Meijer, *Networking Hegemony: Alliance Dynamics in East Asia*, "International Politics", vol. 57 (2020), pp. 131-49; V.D. Cha, *Powerplay: The Origins of the American Alliance System in Asia*, Princeton, 2016.

[4] See FRUS, Memorandum by the Special Assistant to the Consultant Allison to the Ambassador at Large Jessup, 4.1.1951, Asia and the Pacific, 1951, vol. VI, part 1, document 32.

failed in 1951, this US-led network of security assistance could succeed in securing Japan and the rest of Pacific Island nations – Australia, New Zealand, The Philippines, and initially Indonesia – to the Communist menace. Furthermore, it should allow the US to create its hegemony along the island chain ranging from the Aleutians to the South Pacific Ocean. Japan and the Philippines constitute both the backbone of this imagined crescent of security.

As time progressed, the special attention that Japan showed towards Southeast Asia thrived and carried on almost until the late 1980s, when the crisis of bipolar system broke out. In particular, Japanese effort to play a leading role in the region in a context of broader change revolved around notably on the Philippines. In order to grasp the importance of Southeast Asia and the Philippines for Japan's diplomacy at the eve of the end of the Cold War onwards, this paper proceeds as follows. First, it traces the relationship which Japan bolstered with Southeast Asia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) within the space of more than a decade, from Takeshita Noboru's cabinet (1987) to the last year of Hashimoto Ryūtarō's government (1998). Second, it examines Japan's contribution to the democratic process after the fall of Ferdinand Marcos' regime in 1986 and the economic recovery of the Philippines following the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis: in both occasions, it was dramatically viewed as a problematic partner in Southeast Asia's arc of containment, as well as the «sick man» of Asia. This article argues that Japan effectively carved a special place in the development of ASEAN and Southeast Asian states by ensuring a commitment by presence in wide-range fields of co-operation. Moreover, any recovery in the Philippines could not occur without recourse to funds, economic programmes and financial projects approved by Japan's government as of the late 1980s.

Japan's renewed initiatives for Southeast Asia

ASEAN-Japan relations can be understood as a mutual relationship that has developed in a bid to resolve security and stability issues as well as to foster economic, diplomatic, and cultural co-operation within Asia. Since the end of the US occupation of Japan in the early 1950s, the main objective has been to overturn the negative image of Japan in the region by expanding the co-operation

with Southeast Asian countries. While it is a known fact that ASEAN-Japan relations were traditionally grounded in the field of economics, however the political dimension has increasingly augmented from the inception of the "Fukuda doctrine" in 1977. Prime minister Fukuda Takeo (1976-1978) pledged that Japan would never come back a military power, conversely it would build close relations with ASEAN countries on equal basis. Since then, the five ASEAN country members gradually accepted Japan's widening political involvement in response to Japan's efforts to enhance its political credibility[5]. As Radha Sinha argues, Japan's relationship with Southeast Asian countries, and especially with ASEAN countries, was «basically colonial»[6], in both political and economic terms: while Japan has successfully taken back control of regional market since the 1960s, it provided no equal access to Southeast Asian products in its own market.

The appreciation of the yen in the aftermath of the signature of the Plaza Accord in 1985 convinced many Japanese firms that Southeast Asia could represent the best platform to establish lower cost production by exploiting the labour-cost advantage. The appreciation facilitated overseas investment by Japanese firms as it lowered the value of foreign assets in terms of the yen. As a result, Japanese *keiretsu* extended their influence in the region than in the Asian newly industrialised economies (South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore), thus contributing indirectly to the development of specific sectors, mostly the automotive and electronics industries. Japan was forced by the US and Western Europe to implement an action plan to enhance market access by making easier imports from abroad, including ASEAN countries[7]. Accordingly, despite protests showing a single-minded group of Japanese politicians disapproved of this decision, the Japanese government introduced tariff cuts on a series of goods of significant relevance for

[5] B. Singh, *ASEAN's Perceptions of Japan: Change and Continuity*, "Asian Survey", vol. 42 (2002), no. 2, pp. 276-296 (278).

[6] R. Sinha, *Japan and ASEAN: A Special Relationship?*, "The World Today", vol. 38 (1982), no. 12, pp. 483-492 (483).

[7] M.C. Suarez, *Takeshita Unveils Aid Package for Southeast Asia*, "The Associated Press", 15.12.1987.

ASEAN, such as commodities, as a new rapprochement towards one of its main trade partners in Asia[8].

Japan's special relationship with ASEAN was not conceived to establish an economic bloc, but to build a close political coordination. Prime minister Takeshita Noboru (1987-1989) claimed the primary responsibility of the nations of the area was to reduce the potential for conflict in Southeast Asia and blunt the effects of existing quarrels by further strengthening national and regional resilience through closer political, economic, social and cultural co-operation Takeshita reaffirmed their commitment to the realisation of Southeast Asia as a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality by establishing a Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone. As for economic issues, Takeshita put free and open trade, as well as economic growth, at the centre of Japanese foreign policy. ASEAN expressed concern over the effects of the appreciation of the yen and stressed the need for full implementation of a joint development fund in order that it could come fully into effect in Southeast Asia. At the third ASEAN Summit in Manila in December 1987, Takeshita made a speech entitled «Japan and ASEAN: A New Partnership towards Peace and Prosperity» in which he enumerated three basic policies towards ASEAN and Southeast Asian countries: strengthening the economic resilience; promoting political coordination; promoting cultural exchanges. The high point of Takeshita's visit was the formalisation of the ASEAN-Japan Development Fund of more than US$2 billion as the first phase of bilateral co-operation which it would stimulate, with two different categories of loans[9], the private sector in the ASEAN economies. Such a decision stemmed from the Japan's need for expanding its internal demand and opened its market. The disbursement passed through the financial institutions of member countries, and not include the bilateral ties between Japan and each of the ASEAN countries. Takeshita, before resigning because of a gift scandal that has tainted his government, visited Thailand and the rest of ASEAN members in April 1989 to «maintain continuity» in Japan's foreign policy. The government responded to

[8] S. Sudo, *From Fukuda to Takeshita: A Decade of Japan-ASEAN Relations*, "Contemporary Southeast Asia", vol. 10 (1988), no. 2, pp. 119-143 (131).

[9] L.P. Ping, *ASEAN and the Japanese Role in Southeast Asia*, in A. Broinowski (ed.), *ASEAN into the 1990s*, London, 1990, pp. 162-183 (171).

mounting calls for economic assistance from developing countries in the region.

The end of the Cold War opened a window of opportunities and forced Japan to redefine its role in a renewed international environment. Increasing cross-border exchanges would weaken the ideological antagonism which had characterised much of the twentieth century[10]. ASEAN was concerned about the possibility of Japan becoming too absorbed in the changes that were occurring in the Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe, and may neglect the Southeast Asia region. This apprehension has been voiced by Lee Kuan Yew[11], the politically longtime Prime minister of Singapore. In response, Japan, in its efforts to appease such anxiety, made it known at various opportunities. In 1990 Foreign Minister Nakayama Tarō visited Thailand and Malaysia in January, while Prime minister Kaifu Toshiki (1989-1991) undertook a trip to Indonesia in May 1990. On this occasion, Japan's aid to Central and Eastern European countries would in no way affect its support to the ASEAN, especially to the three main recipients of Japanese investment in Southeast Asia. On the *1990 Diplomatic Bluebook*, Japan stressed the main purpose was to advance world peace and stability by promoting the «International Co-operation Initiative» grounded on the three pillars[12]. First, enhancing official development assistance (ODA) which Japan considered as the primary tool guiding the government's aid policy in the region. Second, co-operating for creating a sphere of peace and stability in the region. Third, favouring international cultural exchanges would contribute to the establishment of peace and stability by heightening mutual understanding among nations and creating a richer cultural climate. At that time, the Japan Foundation, a government institution to foster friendship, trust, and mutual understanding all over the world, and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation promoted bilateral exchanges with the ASEAN Cultural Centre in January

[10] B. Edström, *Japan's Evolving Foreign Policy Doctrine: From Yoshida to Miyazawa*, Basingstoke and New York, p. 142.

[11] See K.Y. Lee, *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story, 1965-2000*, New York, 2000.

[12] Diplomatic Bluebook 1990, Japan's Diplomatic Activities. https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/other/bluebook/1990/1990-contents.htm#CONTENTS (Accessed on 30.5.2022).

1990. ASEAN was concerned that any region-wide multilateral security arrangement might weaken its legitimacy and overshadow it. Japan, on the contrary, feared that any multilateral arrangement might undermine the bilateral security frameworks in the region which had seemingly been so successful in ensuring stability in the past. Thus, in July 1990 Kaifu stated that it was too early to support any type of multilateral security arrangement in the region[13].

The ASEAN-Japan Forum held in Tōkyō in September 1990 focussed on trade, economic, and financial issues. The meeting demonstrated how mature the relationship between ASEAN and its dialogue partners had become until then. He also stressed that through their development in the last two decades, ASEAN countries had lured world attention as the most dynamic group of nations in the Asia-Pacific region; furthermore, it had been highly respected for their great contribution to the peace and stability of Asia as well as of the world[14]. ASEAN proposed to Japan specific projects which would further promote technology transfer from Japan to ASEAN and direct investment in the ASEAN region.

Kaifu backed Takeshita's idea that Japan's foreign policy was a pursuit in which its people had to «toil in their sweat»; Japan could no longer expect to reap the benefits of the existing order without making a contribution[15]. Japan attempted to play a role of a honest broker in solving political stalemate in Southeast Asia, as much it made between Indonesia and Malaysia in Borneo against the backdrop of the *Konfrontasi* issue[16]. Japan's diplomacy seized on the Cambodian crisis as a testing ground for proactive and independent course of action[17]. During the delicate negotiations in the Indochina peace process, in which the removal of all the obstacles to the realisation of coexistence and integration in Southeast Asia were the ultimate goals, Japan was resolved to contribute to the

[13] G.D. Hock *et al.*, *Japan's International Relations. Politics, Economics and Security*, Abingdon - New York, 2005 (second edition), p. 232.

[14] Joint Press Statement of the Twelfth ASEAN-Japan Forum Tōkyō, 19-20.9.1990, https://asean.org/joint-press-statement-the-twelfth-asean-japan-forum-tokyo-19-20-september-1990/ (Accessed on 30.5.2022).

[15] Edström, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

[16] See O. Frattolillo, *Reassessing Japan's Cold War: Ikeda Hayato's Foreign Politics and Proactivism during the 1960s*, Abingdon, 2019, pp. 74-114.

[17] M.J. Green, *Japan's Reluctant Realism. Foreign Policy Challenges in an Era of Uncertain Power*, New York, 2001, p. 178.

peace and prosperity of the sub-region. Japan hosted a meeting in Tōkyō between Prince Sihanouk, leader of the anti-Vietnamese resistance, and the Vietnamese-backed Premier Hun Sen in early June 1990. The outcome of the meeting could not be considered a success, since the Khmer Rouge, the strongest of the tripartite coalition resistance, rejected the Tōkyō accord signed between the two leaders. Furthermore, Japan provided support for Indochinese and other refugees everywhere – the *boat people*. By the end of June 1990, Japan accepted over six thousand Indochinese refugees for resettlement, more than one thousand which has promised at the June 1989 International Conference on Indochinese Refugees. At the same time, Japan is working actively through the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees to alleviate the burden on Hong Kong and the ASEAN countries struggling with large influxes of boat people from Vietnam. The Kaifu government began dispatching a strings of screening missions to refugee camps in Southeast Asia which would permit eligible refugees for resettlement to reside in Japan. It allowed refugees already residing in Japan to legally invite their family members from their countries of origin. Ultimately, it extended support for Japanese language education, social adaptation training, employment seeking and other activities in order to promote the integration of refugees into the country[18]. The contribution to the Indochina peace process showed that Kaifu's government not only was able to enhance its political stature in the region18, but it also tried to align decision-making and policy with the core idea of the «Fukuda doctrine»[19].

The year 1991 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of Japan's «Southern military expedition» (*Nanshin-ron*) against the backdrop of the «Greater East Asian War» (*Dai Tōa Sensō*) and Kaifu planed a visit in some ASEAN member states. This was the attempt to overcome widespread feelings of vexation stemming from the crippling event which marked the Southeast Asian history. In May, in Singapore, then Premier formally apologised for Japan's war crimes against people of the area and expressed his «strong feeling of remorse» (*kibishiku hansei*) for a flurry of acts

[18] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Refugees, Acceptance of Refugees by Japan, https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/refugee/japan.html (Accessed on 30.5.2022).

[19] A. Pressello, *Japan and the Shaping of Post-Vietnam War Southeast Asia: Japanese Diplomacy and the Cambodian Conflict*, 1978-93, Abingdon, 2018, p. 218.

that caused «unbearable suffering and grief». Kaifu also made a circumlocutory promise to change Japanese textbooks to reflect more accurately aggression and brutality committed by the Japanese military[20].

Under the Miyazawa Kiichi government (1991-1993), in July 1991 Foreign Minister Nakayama launched a proposal for promoting a region-wide forum for multilateral political dialogue at the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference in Kuala Lumpur. This meeting should become «a forum for political dialogue» designed to improve the sense of mutual security amongst East Asian states in the long-run. Many Japanese diplomats, such as Sato Yukio, were involved in the Nakayama proposal and went through the process of conceptualising their own perspective of a new regional and economic order in the Asia-Pacific. Mounting serious debate within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), their officials discovered the idea to set up a region-wide «multilateral framework»[21] for security dialogue as a new foreign policy option. One of the main reasons for their cool response was the lack of prior consultation between MOFA and its counterparts in ASEAN and the USA before the Nakayama proposal[22].

Japan's contribution to Southeast Asian regional challenges in the post-Cold War scenario

The most critical challenge Japan was facing then was the creation of a regional security and economic multilateralism in the post-Cold War era. Japan encouraged the establishment of the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) in the mid-1988 and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) with a solid co-operation with, respectively, Australia and Singapore. This initially meant that Japan was poised to move away from usual practice of offering

[20] See L.P. Er, *Japan's Postwar Reconciliation with Southeast Asia*, "Asian Journal of Peacebuilding", vol. 3 (2015), no. 1, pp. 43-63; G. Shin - D.C. Sneider, *History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia: Divided Memories*, Abingdon - New York, 2011.

[21] K. Ashizawa, *Japan, the US, and Regional Institution-Building in the New Asia. When Identity Matters*, New York, 2013, pp. 135-138.

[22] T. Yuzawa, *Japan's Security Policy and the ASEAN Regional Forum: The Search for Multilateral Security in the Asia Pacific*, PhD dissertation, University of London, 2005, pp. 45-48.

foreign economic assistance to Asian, and especially, Southeast Asian countries, to provide an effective concept of security to reduce any risk of military and economic confrontation. Despite recognising the existence of lingering doubts regionally about the effectiveness of multilateral regional arrangements that would involve external powers, Japan aimed at creating a political hierarchy in Asia allowing to give an alternative to the security treaty with the US – in a bid to be more independent than in the past[23]. With its deliberative and informal nature, APEC offered the opportunity to Japan to serve as a bridge between Asia and the West[24]. By the same token, in July 1993, at the annual meeting of its foreign ministers held in Singapore, ASEAN convened a wider regional forum in a bid to cope with the post-Cold War regional pattern of power. ASEAN's initiative, which was encouraged by Japan and the US, constituted an attempt to subsume East and Southeast Asia within the same structure of regional confidence-building[25]. The formation of the ARF was perceived by Japan as a supplement and not a substitute to the US-Japan alliance that remains the cornerstone of its post-Cold War foreign policy. Besides enhancing regional security through dialogue and confidence-building measures, the ARF provides Japan with a useful avenue to discuss and influence regional political and strategic issues[26].

In the 1990s, the end of bipolarism and the advancement of globalisation brought to light new issues facing Japan, and various questions were raised with the existing model of development assistance. Japan realised it needed to spend the ODAs more strategically, taking national interests into account and in the respect

[23] D. Arase, *Japan's Evolving Security Policy after the Cold War*, "Journal of East Asian Affairs", vol. 8 (1994), no. 2, pp. 396-419 (409).

[24] R.J. Ellings - S.W. Simon (eds), *Southeast Asian Security in the New Millennium*, Armonk; NY - London, 1996, pp. 145-146.

[25] M. Leifer, *Expanding Horizons in Southeast Asia*, "Southeast Asian Affairs", 1994, pp. 3-21 (4); Address by Prime Minister Miyazawa Kiichi at the National Press Club, Washington DC, 2.7.1992, https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/other/bluebook/1992/1992-appendix-2.htm (Accessed on 30.5.2022).

[26] L.P. Er, *Japan's Search for a Political Role in Southeast Asia*, "Southeast Asian Affairs", (1996), pp. 40-55 (45).

of human rights and not for military use by recipients[27]. Japan has given priority to ODA assistance in strengthening of the economic structure for sustainable growth and the removal of impediments to such growth; poverty alleviation and mitigation of regional disparities; environmental conservation and disaster management; democratisation and institution building. In 1992, Japan formulated the «ODA Charter», a comprehensive document on Japan's mid-to long-term assistance policy which contained humanitarian considerations as a basic philosophy; recognition of interdependence among nations; environmental conservation; and support for the self-help efforts of developing countries towards economic take-off[28].

Reiterating the effot put forward by his predecessors, Miyazawa planned to stabilise the region by launching a series of independent diplomatic initiative[29]. In January 1993 during his tour of the ASEAN nations, he proposed the forum for the «Comprehensive Development of Indochina» as a venue for a debate and exchange of views on the political future of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. The ministerial meeting was held in Tōkyō in February 1995, chaired by Japan, and gathered 25 nations, including the six ASEAN member countries, and eight international organizations, such as the Asian Development Bank. The objectives consisted of the development of the whole of Indochina from a regional perspective; international co-operation through voluntary coordination of assistance; and promotion of market economies in the three countries of the Indochinese sub-region[30]. Japan has long extended financial support for the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), the first occasion on which the UN has taken over the administration of an independent member state. From September 1992 to September 1993, Japan dispatched personnel of the Self-Defence Forces to support the operation, civil-

[27] S.W. Hook - G. Zhang, *Japan's Aid Policy since the Cold War: Rhetoric and Reality*, "Asian Survey", vol. 38 (1998), no. 11, pp. 1051-1066 (1066).

[28] Japan's Official Development Assistance White Paper 2014, p. 4, https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000119315.pdf (Accessed on 30.5.2022).

[29] Edström, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

[30] M. Ishida, *GMS Economic Co-operation and Its Impact on CLMV Development*, in C. Sotharith (ed.), *Development Strategy for CLMV in the Age of Economic Integration*, ERIA Research Project Report 2007-4, Chiba, IDE-JETRO, 2008, pp. 213-214.

ian police officers to assist in training the Cambodian police force. and national and local officers, as well as individuals from private sector to support National Assembly elections required to enact the Cambodian constitution[31].

However, in the wake of the creation of a fruitful approach with the neighbourood, the new centre-left government began to undertake unprecedent actions in regard to the touchy issue of the "comfort women". In July 1995, Prime minister Murayama Tomiichi (1994-1996) launched the Asian Women's Fund (AWF) in the year marking the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Greater East Asian War. After addressing Japan's moral responsibility toward a large number of women involved in sexual exploitation system between the 1930s and the end of the World War II, Murayama proposed a mechanism set up by the Japanese government but managed by volunteers participating in as private citizens. That solution attracted strong criticism by those who insisted on state compensation as the only acceptable resolution to the comfort women issue as a war crime. By the end of 2002, the Fund had concluded its atonement projects, except in the case of Indonesia[32].

MOFA officials focussed on how to use ASEAN as a «balancer» in the increasingly complex US-Japan-China triangle[33]. Prime minister Hashimoto Ryūtarō (1996-1998) sought to build a more explicit strategic relationship with ASEAN. In January 1997 he travelled to the region to propose a broader relationship based on closer, regular consultation at the cabinet level with ASEAN; expanded cultural exchange; and co-operation on transnational and environmental security issues. During his speech in Singapore, Hashimoto affirmed the importance of stability and development in Asia as prerequisites for Japan's domestic and external security: it was then self-evident that the two elements were «inseparable». Moreover, Hashimoto stressed the importance of Japan and ASEAN to find a reasonable and cooperative dialogue at the

[31] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Japan's Contribution to UN Peacekeeping Operations, Japanese Participation in UN Peacekeeping Cambodia, https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/un/pko/pamph96/02_2.html (Accessed on 30.5.2022).

[32] S.C. Soh, *Japan's National/Asian Women's Fund for "Comfort Women"*, "Pacific Affairs", vol. 76 (2003), no. 2, pp. 209-233 (210).

[33] Green, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

World Trade Organisation for a free and open world economy to maintain and strengthen a multilateral free trade system. The then leader of Liberal-Democratic Party welcomed the fact that APEC particularly has gained increasing importance, as a framework for pursuing economic prosperity in the Asia-Pacific, under the ideal of regional co-operation open to the world. Before achieving the necessary prosperity for the area, Hashimoto did not cease to stress the need for Japan and each of the ASEAN countries to take bold steps in domestic reforms, to make both socio-economic systems «more compatible with market mechanisms». Unlike his predecessors, Hashimoto tried to garner more support from the ASEAN countries to play global roles by doing joint initiatives to tackle terrorism, the environment, health and welfare, food and energy shortages[34].

When the financial crisis in 1997-1998 disrupted bilateral trade and investment and halted the economic growth, Japan hastened to assure a critical assistance to Southeast Asian countries hit by an unbridled wave of speculative pressures over their currencies. According to US President Bill Clinton, one way forward to recover Asian economies form this financial shock was «a strong Japanese economy» and feared that if Japan had not led the initiative, «Asia [would have gone] down and US-Japan relations [would have returned] to the days of the 1980s and 1990s»[35]. At the beginning of the crisis, the Japanese government announced assistance measures for East and Southeast Asia totalling approximately US$44 billion up to the end of November 1998. The measures include bilateral co-operation in the context of the assistance package implemented by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), assistance for private investment activities, facilitation of trade financing, assistance to the socially vulnerable, assistance for economic structural reforms, and assistance for human resources development. In late September 1997, Japan launched a plan for

[34] Policy Speech by Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryūtarō, "Reforms for the New Era of Japan and ASEAN for a Broader and Deeper Partnership", Singapore, 14.1.1997, https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/asean/pmv9701/policy.html (Accessed on 30.5.2022).

[35] William J. Clinton Presidential Library, Memorandum of Conversation, "Meeting with Prime minister Ryūtarō Hashimoto of Japan", Vancouver, 24.11.1997, pp. 2-3 [www.clintonlibrary.gov].

the Asian Monetary Fund (AMF) in the annual World Bank-IMF meeting held in Hong Kong. The Hashimoto cabinet intended to pursue an Asian version of the IMF to develop its own regional model of financial cooperation. It proposed the establishment of a fund of US$ 100 billion that would be financed by Asian countries to help the governments cope with currency crisis. Half of its reserves coming from Japan and the remaining US$50 billion from Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, and China. Nevertheless, this proposal met the strong opposition from China, which was afraid of Japanese regional ambitions[36], and the Western countries because it would jeopardise the adequacy of the IMF[37], an important pillar of the «Washington consensus», and impede the liberalisation of trade and finance. In November, the Clinton administration said it would support only the «Manila framework group», centred on the IMF, to address financial crisis, a fine-tuning of surveillance practices to analyse capital flows and to prevent ASEAN's financial and banking systems from collapsing because of a cyclical turmoil[38]. A widespread accusation levelled at Japan is that it was subjugated to the financial rescue programme under the IMF to comply with the US[39].

In overcoming their economic difficulties and to contribute to the stability of international financial markets, Japan launched the «New Miyazawa Initiative» in October 1998 which provided a package of support measures amount US$30 billion, of which US$15 billion were made available for the medium- to long-term financial needs for economic recovery in Asian countries, and another US$15 billion were set aside for their possible short-term capital needs during the process of implementing economic

[36] S. Narine, *The Idea of an "Asian Monetary Fund": The Problems of Financial Institutionalism in the Asia-Pacific*, "Asian Perspective", vol. 27 (2003), no. 2, pp. 65-103 (69).

[37] See P.Y. Lipscy, *Japan's Asian Monetary Fund Proposal*, "Stanford Journal of East Asian Affairs", vol. 3 (2003), no. 1, pp. 93-104; S.N. Katada, *Banking on Stability: Japan and the Cross-Pacific Dynamics of International Financial Crisis Management*, Ann Arbor, 2001, pp. 172-207.

[38] M. Wesley, *The Asian Crisis and the Adequacy of Regional Institutions*, "Contemporary Southeast Asia", vol. 21 (1999), no. 1, pp. 54-73 (58-59).

[39] C.W. Hughes, *Japanese Policy and the East Asian Currency Crisis: Abject Defeat or Quiet Victory?*, "Review of International Political Economy", vol. 7 (2000), no. 2, pp. 219-253 (220).

reform. The Japan Export-Import Bank was the main instrument to support the process. AT the same time, Japan established a Special Yen Loans Facility (SYLF) at ASEAN Leaders' Summit in December 1998, which aimed at increasing productivity and at bringing about economic structural reform by creating an economic environment conducive to private investment.

Japan used to separate politics from economics (*seikei bunri*), in a bid to prevent from worsening relations with the Communist countries or authoritarian regimes in Asia, while keeping a low profile with them in political and diplomatic affairs. Myanmar can be considered as an example of this approach during the late 1980s. As Tōkyō suspended its ODA to Yangon after its leaders suppressed the «888 Uprising» in August 1988, business interests were behind a petition presented to the Japanese government in January 1989 by the Japan-Burma Association, a group gathering mainly members from Japanese top industrial conglomerates, to advocate economic ties despite the military coup. Hideo Watanabe, former Deputy chief cabinet secretary in Nakasone Yasuhiro's government (1982-1987), took the lead to pursuing this stance since he was used to have more access to Burmese senior officials than all but a few foreigners[40]. Through the method of "quiet dialogue" (*shizuka na taiwa*), the Japanese diplomacy sought to persuade Myanmar's military government by ensuring ODAs to soften their approach to political opposition, especially towards Aung San Suu Kyi who was very popular in Japan[41]. In March 1995, Japan partially lifted its ODA curbs and extended humanitarian aid to Myanmar. Three years on, in a move that both Aung San Suu Kyi's National League of Democracy and the Clinton administration severely lambasted[42], the Japanese government announced the release of about US$20 million in loan funds for renovating Rangoon's Mingaladon International Airport. It has seized every opportunity to encourage the military government

[40] A. Slodkowski, *Special Report: How Japan Inc Stole a March in Myanmar*, "Reuters", 2.10.2012.

[41] D.M. Seekins, *Japan's Development Ambitions for Myanmar: The Problem of "Economics before Politics*", "Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs", vol. 34 (2015), no. 2, pp. 113-138 (128); L.P. Er, cit., pp. 47-48.

[42] D.M. Seekins, *Japan's "Burma Lovers" and the Military Regime*, "Asian Perspective", vol. 24 (2000), no. 4, pp. 315-334 (326).

to promote multi-party democratic system and improve human rights through guaranteeing political freedom, ensuring the due process of law, resuming student exchanges in education sector[43]. What ensued was the emergence of a temporary chasm between Japan and the US which was very akin to what happened in the case of Vietnam in the coming years: as a matter of fact, Tōkyō normalised a full-scale relationship with Vietnam in November 1992 while the US embargo was still into effect, but Tōkyō was cautious not to provoke Washington[44].

Japan's diplomacy towards Manila after the end of the Marcos rule

The Philippines was widely acknowledged as a significant pawn for Japan's diplomacy because it was in Manila that Prime minister Fukuda proclaimed its doctrine for Southeast Asia in 1977. Both countries embraced the liberal and democratic discourse during the height of the Cold War and joined the US-led asymmetrical system of alliance relationship (*dōmei kankei*) that was originally directed against the Communist expansion in Asia. Whilst under the Ferdinand Marcos rule the adherence to the San Francisco system favoured Manila to solve certain issues on war reparations and to assess the best way to accrue the Japanese investment in the country, since the late 1990s the two spokes have crossed different paths. On the one hand, US-Japan security relations aimed to maintain a stable regional balance of power and address potential short-term regional conflicts. On the other, the aim of US-Philippines security ties turned into various domestic insurgencies and the Islamic fundamentalism in the Mindanao region[45]. Nevertheless, both are influenced by China's emergence in East Asia. In the face of China's growing economic and political clout in the mid-1990s, mainly in the South China Sea, Tōkyō needed to strengthen its

[43] Press Conference by the Press Secretary, 17.7.1998, https://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/press/1998/7/717.html#1 (Accessed on 30.5.2022).

[44] A. Miyashita, *Limits to Power: Asymmetric Dependence and Japanese Foreign Aid Policy*, Lanham; MD, 2003, pp. 97-99.

[45] R.C. De Castro, *Exploring a 21st-Century Japan-Philippine Security Relationship: Linking Two Spokes Together?*, "Asian Survey", vol. 49 (2009), no. 4, pp. 691-715 (706).

security alliance with Washington[46] to avert a potential military conflict Beijing would pose.

The former President Corazon "Cory" Aquino (1986-1992) was convinced that the friendship between Japanese and Filipinos thrived on several levels: geopolitical, socio-economic, and personal. The relationship between two democratic societies worked together to preserve liberal principles in Asia, and the common locations of the two countries made them each other's «defenders, protectors and economic allies»[47]. The diplomatic relation was viewed in terms of «an earnest and nurturing» friendship flourishing between «an elder and developed civilisation and a young and growing country». In some ways, President Aquino recognised Japan was to the Philippines a *Sensei* – a «teacher and inspiration» to a struggling country in Asia[48]. The Japanese have demonstrated what the Philippines could become «by working hard, taking pride in culture and identity, and believing in the principal of equality of any nation». Finally, Aquino stressed the importance of the «intimate and relaxed»[49] political relation between her husband, Benigno S. Aquino Sr, and some Japanese personalities at a time when Benigno Aquino joined the Japanese-sponsored puppet state between 1942 and 1945[50].

At the meeting of the Consultative Group for the Philippines held in Tōkyō in July 1989, Japan expressed its intention to provide the Philippines with ODA totalling about 135 billion for fiscal year 1989 to launch the «Multilateral Aid Initiative», a programme that diplomats and commentators avoided to refer as a «mini-Marshall Plan»[51]. In 1990, the Philippines is the top recipient of Japan's ODA

[46] See I. Makoto - T. Minohara Tosh (eds), *The History of US-Japan Relations: From Perry to the Present*, Singapore, 2017; S. Ogawa, *Significance of the Post-Cold War: US-Japan Alliance and Prospects for Security Co-operation*, "Korean Journal of Defense Analysis", vol. 6 (1994), no.1, pp. 57-78.

[47] Speech of President Corazon Aquino on the Philippine-Japan Friendship Society, 16.1.1987, https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/1987/01/16/speech-of-president-corazon-aquino-on-the-philippine-japan-friendship-society-january-16-1987/ (Accessed on 30.5.2022).

[48] *Ibid.*

[49] *Ibid.*

[50] *Ibid.*

[51] S. Rood, *The "Mini-Marshall Plan" for the Philippines*, in C.Y. Ng - C. Jeshurun (eds), *Southeast Asian Affairs 1990*, Singapore, 1990, pp. 273-291.

after Indonesia and China[52]. The allegations of corruption at the height of the Marcos scandal revealed that from 10 to 15 percent of loans implemented in the early 1970s by the Overseas Economic Co-operation Fund – one of the agencies of Japanese foreign aid – was systematically given as kickbacks to President Marcos and his cronies by more than fifty Japanese aid contractors through a system of contract fraud and illegal payments[53]. That meant that under the Marcos's rule Japan imposed neither political conditionality nor progressive policy reforms. At a time when President Aquino came to power Japan began working more closely with other international donors, that had more experience in providing loans, to enshrine specific policy conditions before authorising its ODAs[54]. Both Takeshita and Kaifu pursued the policy of extending the maximum assistance to the Aquino administration for its nation-building efforts[55], particularly after the sixth coup attempt that endangered presidency in December 1989.

The year 1990 put a strain both on the young Filipino democracy and relationship with Japan. The Philippine economy was littered with the negative conjunction of the reiterated of coup attempts, the earthquake in Luzon, and ineffective or inadequate policies, mainly the agrarian reform, that were far from being approved by the Congress. On the occasion of the ASEAN-Japan Forum in 1990, Philippines' delegation expressed vehemently its concern on continuing imbalances in the bilateral trade and urged Tōkyō to import more manufactured and semi-manufactured products from ASEAN. To top it all off, the Aquino administration was forced to enlist the IMF, on the one hand, to implement a bailout package to reduce government subsidies and raise revenue; on the other, it found ways to generate the foreign exchange needed to continue to make its foreign debt and commodities' payment. This blueprint

[52] Cited in Hook - Zhang, *op. cit.*, p. 1059.

[53] D.D. Trinidad, *Japan's ODAs at the Crossroads: Disbursement Patterns of Japan's Development Assistance to Southeast Asia*, "Asian Perspective", vol. 31 (2007), no. 2, pp. 95-125 (102).

[54] M.T. Tana - Y. Takagi, *Japan's Foreign Relations with the Philippines: A Case of Evolving Japan in Asia*, in J.D.J. Brown - J. Kingston (eds), *Japan's Foreign Relations in Asia*, Abingdon - New York, 2018, pp. 312-328 (314).

[55] Policy Speech by Prime minister Noboru Takeshita to the 114th Session of the National Diet, 10.02.1989, https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/other/bluebook/1989/1989-appendix-1.htm (Accessed on 30.05.2022).

established a new set of economic performance targets. It could initially count on about US$535 million in Japanese loans, primarily[56].

Fidel V. Ramos inaugurated, quite implausibly, his administration (1992-1998) claiming two basic concerns about Japan and the US security system in Asia. First, the alliance between Japan and the US had to be preserved; second, is Japan had to project its political standing in the area as much as it was able to fulfil its economic power as of the end of US occupation of the country in 1952. Ramos stressed the US-Japan alliance should not be considered as crumbling in a post-Cold War era, even though he firmly believed the military pact had to be «redefined into something closer to a genuine partnership». However, there was indeed an inherent anomaly – «similar to the original West European effort to keep apart Western and East Germany»: post-Cold War Japan continued to remain «a strategic client of the US». This can lead to «an unhealthy kind of nationalism» in a country acutely aware of both its economic strength and its cultural uniqueness[57]. Manila, as well as other Asian governments, maintained that a rebirth of Japanese militarism continued to be a concrete menace. In February 1993, at the Philippines-Japan Society in Makati City President Ramos said the Philippines would have much to learn from «Japan's ethos of excellence». He spoke not only of the means of progress, but of the attitudes and values that make for those means[58]. It was Japan that José Rizal, the celebrated progenitor of Philippine nationalism, spoke of warmly in 1888 during a six-week visit there, when he said that he was impressed by the discipline, the honesty and industriousness of the Japanese people. In 1998 Japanese government paid a tribute to Rizal by erecting a bronze bust of the main Filipino poet and novelist along a trail within Hibiya Park, a large public park next to the Imperial Palace.

[56] D.G. Timberman, *The Philippines in 1990: On Shaky Ground*, "Asian Survey", vol. 31 (1991), no. 2, pp. 153-163 (161).

[57] Address of President Fidel V. Ramos, East West Center, Honolulu, 16.10.1995, https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CREC-1995-11-27/pdf/CREC-1995-11-27-pt1-PgS17518.pdf (Accessed on 30.5.2022).

[58] Speech of President Fidel V. Ramos, Philippines-Japan Society, Makati City, 25.2.1993, https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/1993/02/25/speech-of-president-ramos-to-the-philippines-japan-society-february-25-1993/ (Accessed on 30.5.2022).

In July 1995, three years on a former Filipina comfort women spoke out in public, President Ramos accepted the apologies made by Japan in August 1994, on the occasion of Murayama's Southeast Asia tour. The assistance provided an atonement fund, medical and welfare support programmes, and a letter of apology from Japanese government to each woman. Murayama told Ramos that his new coalition government was «considering seriously [...] how best to express its apology and remorse on the issue of comfort women». Murayama, moreover, added that the government would help establish «women's vocational training centres» within a framework of economic co-operation[59]. And so did the Japanese government almost until the 1990s. After this qualitative change, the Philippines was led to support, within the context of United Nations reforms, Japan's bid for a permanent seat in the Security Council.

In July 1997, Thailand's *bath*, equity, and property markets weakened further as its difficulties evolved into a twin balance-of-payments and banking crisis. Malaysia, the Philippines, and Indonesia also allowed their currencies to weaken substantially in the face of market pressures, with on the eve of the crisis the Philippine financial system looked more solid than did others in Asia. In March 1999, Manila received US$1.6 billion under the framework of the New Miyazawa Initiative. All financial programmes would be implemented by the Export-Import Bank of Japan, the ADB and the World Bank[60]. Compared to the other ASEAN countries, the Philippines had relatively less exposure to Japanese bank lending[61] for a twofold reason: first, Japan registered low levels of foreign direct investment in the Philippinesregistering low levels of Japanese foreign direct investment in the Philippines. In 1996, Japanese FDI in ASEAN-4 economies (Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines and Malaysia) totalled more than US$5.1 billion – with Indonesia

[59] W. Branigin, *Japan Offers Atonement for Sex Slavery*, "The Washington Post", 25.08.1994.

[60] Ministry of Finance of Japan, *Japanese Financial Support to the Philippines under the Framework of the New Miyazawa Initiative*, 15.01.1999, https://www.mof.go.jp/english/policy/international_policy/financial_cooperation_in_asia/new_miyazawa_initiative/e1e061.htm (Accessed on 30.05.2022).

[61] M. Noland, *The Philippines in the Asian Financial Crisis: How the Sick Man Avoided Pneumonia*, "Asian Survey", vol. 40 (2000), no. 3, pp. 401-412 (410).

and Thailand the largest recipients. Indonesia alone absorbed more than US$2.5 billion[62]. Second, the Ramos administration makes less dependent financial market to Japanese financial institution encouraging non-Japanese banks to enter the market[63].

Japan exhibited its protracted effort toward the economic development of the Philippines in Mindanao, the southern distressed region of the country. Before World War II a huge number of Japanese people migrated to Davao region to engage in the production of abaca. Since then, Davao has been hosting the biggest Japanese community in Southeast Asia. Between 1992 and 1998, at a time when the new President Ramos encouraged other donors except from the US to assist Mindanao after the Moro nationalist insurgency was temporarily halted, Japan outlined its intention to assist significantly new assistance to Mindanao with Japan Bank for International Co-operation (JBIC) and Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA) funding for major infrastructure projects[64]. Japan's assistance to Mindanao started from the construction of a fishing port in Zamboanga way back in 1978. Japan financed Malitubog-Maridagao Irrigation Project in 1990, a grant to build a supply of road construction equipment in western Mindanao (1998) and a loan for improvement in power grid project (1995) and a loan for the construction of the Philippine-Japan Friendship Highway rehabilitation project (1997). JICA's assistance to Mindanao in the 1990s was mainly directed toward supporting the development policies of the Philippine government, which gave priority to agricultural infrastructure development during the Aquino administration, and to economic development and the reduction of inequality through regional economic co-operation and the social reform agenda during the Ramos administration[65].

[62] Y. Sazanami *et al.*, *Japanese Foreign Direct Investment to East Asia and Exchange Rate Policies – Some Longer-Term Policy Implications After the Crisis*, "Keiko Economic Studies", vol. 40 (2003), no. 1, pp. 1-26 (2).

[63] Noland, *op. cit.*, p. 410.

[64] A. Fermin - T. Parks, *The Contested Corners of Asia: Subnational Conflict and International Development Assistance. The Case of Mindanao, Philippines*, "The Asia Foundation", 2013, p. 24.

[65] Japan International Co-operation Agency, *Comprehensive Review of JICA's Assistance in Mindanao*, Report, February 2021, pp. 56-57.

Conclusion

Southeast Asia must be considered as the main stage of Japan's diplomacy in the Cold War era, as well as in the post-bipolar world. Although the relationship presented several problems in the past, solved just partly after the enunciation of the «Fukuda doctrine», the Takeshita and Hashimoto initiatives demonstrated that it was possible to successfully establish broader economic co-operation with ASEAN and, at the same time, to build a close political commitment. These initiatives took part of a comprehensive strategy of the MOFA to pursue an independent diplomacy in Asia. Mainly since the Kaifu government, Japan non only succeeded to enhance its political stature in the region, but also it tried to align decision-making and policy with the core idea of Fukuda's strategy. The major success of Japan's diplomacy towards Southeast Asia can be encapsulated into three main lines of intervention.

First, participation in the regional process in Asia constituted the right action to contribute to the success of the region and reap the benefits of co-operation against the backdrop of the new wave of globalisation. Japanese participation in Asian regional co-operation raised its international political profile. Compared to the past, in the 1990s Japan did not plan on creating a new-pan Asian identity, but it rather pledged to become an harmless power in the Asia-Pacific. A narrower involvement of Japan in regional affairs after the end of the Cold War elicited fears among the Asian nations: it, of course, might say this was the price that Tōkyō had to pay during the first half of the twentieth century for its militaristic stance. Although the economic factor dominated relations between Japan and Southeast Asia for much of the post-war period, the non-economic aspects have become increasingly significant, and cannot be ignored when Japan emphasised the importance to remove Asian concerns about the future direction of Japan's diplomacy. Japan could not miss this opportunity to increase its commitment in Southeast Asia; still less could ASEAN members failed to gain broader opportunities from a direct co-operation with Japan, especially in the economic field.

Second, Japan has constituted a successful form of economic model since the 1980s. The Philippines often expressed some intention of emulating Japanese economic experience, as well as other Southeast Asian countries found an inspiration to Japanese

industrial model over the past: Singapore launched its «Learn from Japan» campaign in 1978 and Malaysia's Mahathir Mohamad did the same putting forward its «Look East» policy in 1982. Japan-Philippine relations continued to be robust after the end of martial law. The US saw this broader co-operation as a good signal, but Japan did not receive foreign pressure from Washington. Japan has been providing economic assistance to the Philippines since the restoration of democracy, and its contribution focussed on Mindanao region. Since the financial meltdown erupted in Southeast Asia in 1997, Japan was committed to halting the magnitude of crisis as any negative consequences from the ASEAN economies would jeopardise financial and political stability in Asia. Nevertheless, its increasing economic presence in international financial institution, Japan found it difficult to realise the AMF because of the opposition of Western countries and China. As a result, Japan failed to impose its political clout and exposed weaknesses of Japan's leadership in Southeast Asia.

Third, most Japan's diplomatic success in sharpening solid relations with ASEAN and Southeast Asian countries hinged upon the positive outcome of ODA strategy. Pan-Asian sentiment resurfaced after the end of the Cold War since Japan showed sympathetic about the Southeast Asian countries' economic and social development on the basis of an even relationship. If it is acceptable the notion according to which the ODA strategy could be explained in terms of «Pan-Asianism»[66] – which does not be confused with the ideology of the «Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere» – it can be similarly claimed that this important foreign policy instrument assured to Japan a primary approach to Southeast Asian countries. The ODAs, on the one hand, served Japan's economy and security because they set in motion export strategy and dynamic competitive advantages in international trade; on the other, they contributed to the alleviation of poverty in low- and middle income countries of the area whose stability has been always considered essential to Japan's diplomacy.

[66] H. Ryūhei, *Pan-Asianism in International Relations. Prewar, Postwar, and Present*, in S. Saaler - J.V. Koschmann (eds), *Pan-Asianism in Modern Japanese History: Colonialism, Regionalism, and Borders*, Abingdon - New York, 2007, pp. 226-245 (230).

Grand Strategy or Grand Identity? Narratives of "Universal Values" and Autonomy in Japanese Foreign Policy*

di Erik Isaksson

Abstract *– Narratives emphasizing "universal" and "shared" values as well as "democracy," "human rights," "the rule of law," and "freedom" are a staple in Japanese foreign policy and are ubiquitous to the extent that any discussion of a Japanese "Grand Strategy" must relate to them. At the same time, there is plenty of evidence that Japan's own democracy is challenged at home. Where does this discrepancy come from? Most previous research has ignored the narratives themselves, rather focusing on the policies they underpin. Ontological security scholarship has shown that a strive for autonomy – an identity as an important state – undergirds contentious political issues in Japan, and that this autonomy narrative constituted the universal values narrative during the governments of Abe Shinzo. Drawing on that work, this paper seeks complete the picture on what this narrative means to Japan? The paper first uses previous research to examine the roots of the autonomy narrative, and how words from the values narrative and the autonomy narrative started appearing together at the same time as the rise of the traditionally anti-mainstream faction (Seiwaken) of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). Second, the article examines MOFA Bluebooks and speeches by the prime minister in the years 2008-2012, to see whether and to what extent the narrative on values during this period was constituted similar to the way it was during the Abe governments. The result is mixed: there were similarities, but the narrative was less prominent during 2008-2012. The paper argues that the results corroborate that a combined values/autonomy narrative has gained a measure of dominance in Japanese foreign policy, and that an ontological security framework that is sensitive to multiple ontological insecurities within states might allow future research to understand what lies behind the differences between the Abe governments, and the governments in 2008-2012.*

* Particular thanks for valuable comments on earlier drafts of this article go to Linus Hagström and Ra Mason along with other participants in the annual conference of the Nordic Association for the Study of Contemporary Japanese Society in Oslo, 12-13 May 2022, as well as to Jesper Dunell, Karl Gustafsson, Alexander Ryan and other participants in peer review seminars at Stockholm University in Spring 2022.

Introduction

Why does Japan talk about "universal values", "shared values", "democracy", "human rights", "the rule of law", and "freedom" in its foreign policy[1]? This question becomes particularly puzzling, when one considers how there has been criticism against Japan in later years that its democracy at home is challenged, particularly regarding freedom of the press[2]. Granted, this talk is not entirely new; these words have appeared in Japanese foreign policy narratives for a long time[3]. However, during the two conservative governments of the late Abe Shinzo (2007-2008 and 2012-2020), they started being used together with the imperative that Japan needs to be an international leader of their defense and with the identity claim that Japan is a long-time democrat. They were also increasingly used in an international security context[4]. This was exemplified by the introduction of policies and strategies like the Arc of Freedom and Prosperity (AFP), and "value-oriented diplomacy" that argued Japan should take on a prominent international

[1] Hereafter, the shorthands "universal values narrative" and "values narrative" are interchangeably used to refer to Japan's narratives on universal and shared values that emphasize democracy, human rights, the rule of law, and freedom. The claim of universality is, of course, a construction and inherently political, and this paper does not seek to essentialize either of these terms. The aim of the paper is, rather, to analyze the specific ways in which the Japanese government talks about these terms.

[2] Freedom House (2021), Freedom in the World 2021: Japan. [Online], https://freedomhouse.org/country/japan/freedom-world/2021 (Accessed on 14.5.2022); United Nations Human Rights Council. (2017). Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression on his mission to Japan. [Online], https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1301336?ln=en. (Accessed on 14.5.2022).

[3] MOFA. (1957). 「二、わが国外交の基調.」 『わが外交の近況 昭和32年9月』[Online], https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/bluebook/1957/s32-1-2.htm. (Accessed on 24.4.2022).

MOFA. (1970). 「第二節 基本的指針」『わが外交の近況 昭和44年度(第14号)』[Online], https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/bluebook/1970/s44-contents.htm. (Accessed on 28.4.2022).

MOFA. (1980).「昭和61年版「わが外交の近況」の刊行にあたって」[Online], mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/bluebook/1980/s55-contents.htm. (Accessed on 24.4.2022).

[4] E. Isaksson, *Longtime Democrat, Future Leader: the Particular Logic of Japan's Values Discourse*, "UI Brief" (2022), no. 2, pp. 1-14.

role drawing on its history as a democrat to assist other budding democracies. These particular slogans later fell into disuse, but the main signs of the narrative underpinning them – "universal values", "shared values" "democracy", "human rights", "the rule of law", and "freedom"[5] – have since then reappeared prominently within, for example, Japan's first ever National Security Strategy from 2013, official descriptions of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) starting in 2016, and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) since 2017.

One might reasonably contend that a rhetorical commitment to values in foreign policy does not necessarily translate into upholding those values domestically; there might be other reasons behind the narrative used. This paper agrees. There are, however, limitations in the previous scholarship that has offered these types of explanations. The little previous research that has touched on this narrative has relegated the actual discourse, what is being said, to a level of secondary importance. Instead, it has attempted to explain the policies that the narrative underpins, such as the AFP and the latter-day FOIP. Balance of power-realists, on the one hand, have argued that these policies are meant to counter China's material influence[6]. Complex interdependence-liberals, on the other, have seen them as designed precisely to uphold an international order that is materially beneficial to Japan[7]. These are all important issues and reasonable explanations for the motivations behind the policies. What they as explanations do not do, however, is show why Japan employs these specific narratives it to balance China, or

[5] Original Japanese terms are *fuhenteki kachi*, *kyoyusuru kachi*/*tomo ni suru kachi*, *minshushugi*. *jinken*, *ho no shihai*, *jiyu*.

[6] E.g., Y. Soeya, 「日本のインド太平洋外交と近隣外交」」『国際問題』 (2020), no. 688, pp. 18-32; M. Kawai, 「第 5 章『一帯一路』構想と『インド太平洋』構想」 in N. Inaba (ed), 反グローバリズム再考：『反グローバリズム再考：国際経済秩序を揺るがす危機要因の研究「世界経済研究会」報告書』, Tōkyō, 2018, pp. 95-155.

[7] E.g., Y. Funabashi - G. J. Ikenberry, *Introduction: Japan and the Liberal International Order* in Y. Funabashi - G.J. Ikenberry (ed), *The Crisis of Liberal Internationalism: Japan and the World Order*, Washington, DC, 2020, pp. 1-35; T. Satake, *Japan's "Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy" and its Implication for ASEAN*, "Southeast Asian Affairs" (2019), pp. 69-82.

to uphold a materially beneficial order. After all, it seems possible for Japan to shed universal values rhetoric, and still balance against China. Some, like Hosoya Yuichi[8], have allowed that an increased focus on norms in international relations since the 1990s is a trend "Japan cannot ignore" that has contributed to these narratives, but that still leaves one wondering what the dynamics are that purportedly force Japan to use a certain narrative. While there is plenty of research on how Japanese identity is constructed through narratives that produce difference with Others[9], and through domestic institutions[10], neither this scholarship has dealt much specifically with Japan's values narratives.

To even begin to answer the question of why the Japanese government employs these narratives, we need to understand what they mean *to them*, and this requires an investigation into how they construct them discursively. This has partly been done in previous research, which has shown that the narratives during the Abe governments functioned to construct an identity of Japan as a long-time democrat and an international leader, drawing on a long-standing narrative of Japan as lacking autonomy in international affairs[11]. This article builds on this previous research and examines whether the universal values narrative was constituted in the same way – emphasizing Japan's democratic credentials, and the need for Japan to be a leader – during the intervening years between the two Abe governments (2008-2012). It does so to examine whether the historical anxiety regarding Japan's autonomy – an anxiety of not being seen as an important state rather than one that worries about losing agency – is present more broadly in Japanese politics than only in the milieu that gathered around Abe

[8] Y. Hosoya, *The Rise and Fall of Japan's Grand Strategy: The "Arc of Freedom and Prosperity" and the Future Asian Order*, "The Asia-Pacific Review", vol 18 (2011), no. 1, p. 15.

[9] E.g., L. Hagström - K. Gustafsson, *Japan and identity change: why it matters in International Relations*, "*The Pacific Review*" vol. 28 (2015), no. 1, pp. 1-22; T. Tamaki, *The Persistence of Reified Asia as Reality in Japanese Foreign Policy Narratives*, "The Pacific Review", vol. 28 (2015), no. 1, pp. 23-45.

[10] E.g., A. Oros, *International and domestic challenges to Japan's postwar security identity: 'norm constructivism' and Japan's new 'proactive pacifism'*, "The Pacific Review", vol. 28 (2015), no. 1, pp. 139-160.

[11] Isaksson, *Longtime Democrat*..., cit. pp. 1-14.

Shinzo. The findings are mixed, and the paper argues for future research to apply an ontological security approach that looks at the potential for differing conceptions of ontological security in Japan. The strive for autonomy, in other words for status as an important state, can explain part of the motivation behind Japan's universal values discourse, but it remains to be studied how manifestly different levels of anxiety among different governments regarding national identity matter to Japan's foreign policy.

Ontological Security and "Autonomy"

The paper employs a basic ontological security theoretical approach that sees security in the Self – security in one's identity or ontological security – as a driving force for foreign policy. Actors within states seek ontological security because they want to maintain, in the words of Brent Steele[12], "consistent self-concepts". But who, then, is the ontologically insecure subject? Can "Japan" feel ontological insecurity? Jennifer Mitzen contends that it is useful to treat states "as if" they were persons, because groups (nations) maintain distinctiveness by routinizing their relationship to other groups (nations)[13]. However, this, and Steele's position that state agents "are the state", because they "have the moral burden of making policy choices *and* the capacity to implement those decisions" draws attention away from the possibility that the ontological security of other powerful actors, like opposition politicians or influential elites, can have bearing on decisions, and that the ontological insecurities could change with a change in government[14]. The Japanese autonomy narrative introduced above, for example, can be exemplified by the founding declaration of the Liberal Democratic Party, which pessimistically stated that "[...] patriotism and the spirit of autonomy is lost, politics are in a stupor, the economy is far from independent. [...] [A]n independent system

[12] B. Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations: Self-Identity and the IR State*, London, 2008, p. 3.

[13] J. Mitzen, *Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma,* "European Journal of International Relations", vol. 12 (2006), no. 3, p. 351.

[14] Steele, *Ontological Security*..., cit. p. 18.

[of sovereign rule] is still not in place [...]"[15]. The LDP has been in power (almost) ever since, but Japan has never strayed from its close relationship with the U.S., for example, even though the U.S. has been an important "other" throughout the postwar period, one that supposedly kept Japan from becoming fully autonomous[16]. This could of course come from other factors than differing ontological security perceptions, such as a sense of physical security through the U.S.-Japan Alliance, but the state-as-person view precludes us from imagining the possibility of different conceptions of ontological security within states, and the possibility that those differences allow for different outcomes. This makes it important to examine the intervening period between the two Abe governments, to see whether the identity narrative identified during the Abe governments was present during the intervening period. If it was not, or was less present, there could be room for the argument that different political actors conceive of their ontological security differently.

This paper follows Suzuki Shogo, in positing that anxiety related to Japanese autonomy is the main ontological security issue that has undergirded other contentious political issues in Japan since the end of World War II[17]. It furthers builds on Ayse Zarakol's observation that desire for respect and recognition by the international community is that which has guided Japan's foreign policy decisions[18]. This anxiety has been particularly identifiable in the milieu around the conservative *Seiwa Seisaku Kenkyukai (Seiwaken)* within the LDP, which since its founding constituted the intraparty opposition to the factions that supported the dominant Yoshida Doctrine in foreign policy, whereby Japan "kept its head down" in military affairs and focused on its economy. This paper's usage of "autonomous" is no direct and perfect translation of terms used in Japanese, but rather a term to capture a strive

[15] LDP. (2022). 「立党宣言」 [Online], https://www.jimin.jp/aboutus/declaration/ (Accessed on 25.4.2022).

[16] S, Suzuki, *The Rise of the Chinese 'Other' in Japan's Construction of Identity: Is China a Focal Point of Japanese Nationalism*? "The Pacific Review", vol. 28 (2015), no. 1, pp. 95-116.

[17] Suzuki, *The Rise of the Chinese*..., cit. p. 100.

[18] A. Zarakol, *Ontological (in)Security and State Denial of Historical Crimes: Turkey and Japan*, "International Relations", vol. 24 (2010) no. 1, pp. 3-23.

for prestige that is present in political narratives emanating from this milieu. "Autonomous" or "independent" (*dokuritsushita*) are words that tend to be used in direct conjunction with a call for patriotism or pride in the Japanese nation and calls for a stronger Japan. An example of this is the LDP declaration which states that Japan was weakened by the initial policy of the U.S. occupation, and that patriotism was unduly suppressed; this is a different type of anxiety regarding autonomy, than anxiety that Japan's agency being challenged. The paper therefore wants "autonomous" state to be understood not as the opposite to "unfree" or "dependent", but as the opposite to "insignificant", and as a goal meant to secure Japan's status as (at the very least) an equal with other states. The anxiety felt by some Japanese actors on the political right, is thus anxiety that Japan is seen as insignificant in international politics[19].

The paper employs a discourse analytical approach that sees identities as coming into existence through biographical narratives about the Self, stories through which the Self is understood and acquires meaning to the individual in question[20]. In the following empirical section, the paper first recalls previous research to show how the search for autonomy has roots in Japanese foreign policy since the Meiji period (1868-1912), and that since the first Abe government and the rise of the *Seiwaken* within the LDP, references to Japanese autonomy or significance have become part and parcel of the universal values narrative, creating what the paper refers to as a values/autonomy narrative. The paper then examines Ministry of Foreign Affairs Bluebooks and the Prime minister's yearly speech to the National Diet (Parliament) between 2008-2012. It does so to see whether and how the values/autonomy narrative identified during the Abe governments was present during these intervening years between his two governments. In the language of ontological security studies, the expressions of this narrative are expressions of anxiety that the narrative tries to suppress, to narrate a stable Self. The results show that the picture is blurred, but broadly, the combined narrative was weaker during

[19] Accordingly, the paper uses "autonomous identity" and "autonomy narrative" to refer to identities and narratives that emphasize an important and significant international role for Japan.

[20] A. Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity,* Palo Alto, 1991, p. 243.

the intervening years. The paper argues that anxiety relating to Japan as not autonomous/insignificant, characteristic of the LDP *Seiwaken* milieu, is the main factor that accounts for the difference between the narratives during the intervening years and the Abe years. It also contends that this *Seiwaken*-felt anxiety, which forces the actors prop up their identity through narratives, accounts for the discrepancy between Japan's democracy deteriorating at home, and Japan's promoting "universal values" abroad.

Champion of Universal Values, Important State in International Politics

Roots of Autonomy Narrative: from the Meiji Period Onwards

This section draws on previous research for an overview of the history of the autonomy narrative. As Suzuki has argued, a main point of anxiety that has undergirded contentious political issues in postwar Japan, such as revision of the constitution, is a perceived lack of autonomy of the state[21]. The idea of a lack of autonomy, or a sense of not being on equal terms with other states in the international system, has been around for a very long time. 1930s Japan saw its foreign policy objectives as best served by a position as a hegemon in East Asia, and before that, Meiji Japan was motivated by a desire for a position of equality with "Occidential World Powers"[22]. According to Stefan Tanaka, Meiji Japan accepted "sweeping views of world development" from Europe and identified Japan's position within this view as the main problem[23].

After the war, Japanese autonomy was an important enough issue that it made it into the founding declaration of the LDP, quoted in the previous section[24]. The narrative was expressed in similar ways during the Cold War as it is today, only without incorporating

[21] Suzuki, *The Rise of the Chinese...*, cit., p. 100.

[22] J. Crowley, *Japan's Quest for Autonomy: National Security and Foreign Policy, 1930-1938*. Princeton, 1966, pp. xv-xvi.

[23] S. Tanaka, *Japan's Orient: Rendering Pasts Into History*, Berkeley, 1994, p. 33.

[24] LDP (2022), 「立党宣言」 [Online], https://www.jimin.jp/aboutus/declaration/ (Accessed on 25.4.2022).

the universal values narrative. For example, in the 1980 MOFA Bluebook, Foreign Minister Ito Masayoshi described Japanese foreign policy as aiming to "proactively contribute to world peace and stability" and that Japan aims to become a "trusted and respected country"[25]. Concern over autonomy was expressed differently by different actors, but it was a concern shared by actors with otherwise wildly different politics. Suzuki has called the two post-war groups who felt anxiety regarding Japanese autonomy the "idealist left" and "idealist right"[26]. The idealist left saw the U.S.- Japan alliance as hindering their desired identity of Japan as being a state pursuing "unarmed neutrality". They were, however, marginalized in the 1990s when the Socialist Party imploded. The idealist right, or the group Richard Samuels has called the "neo-autonomists"[27] – those seeking to distance Japan from the U.S. and to strengthen domestic military capability – has gradually seen more success. A typical example of this group was Ishihara Shintaro, who in the late 1980s together with Sony executive Morita Akio wrote *A Japan that can say No*, arguing for greater autonomy from the U.S. and greater domestic military capabilities. While Japan is still a staunch U.S. ally, its own military capabilities have steadily grown; the reinterpretation of the Constitution in 2014 that allowed for collective self-defence and the related security laws of 2015 can be seen as a pinnacle in Japan's moving toward stronger military capabilities. Additionally, the most important issue to the idealist right, not just reinterpreting, but changing the Japanese constitution to get rid of the "peace clause" Article 9, which prohibits Japan from having "war potential" and renounces war as a "sovereign right of the nation", has gradually become more realistic. The aim to change the constitution is now shared by large parts of the political opposition[28]. As detailed below, the idealist right, centred around the *Seiwaken*, has gained greater prominence within the LDP.

[25] MOFA (1980), 「昭和61年版「わが外交の近況」の刊行にあたって」[Online], mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/bluebook/1980/s55-contents.htm (Accessed on 24.4.2022).

[26] Suzuki, *The Rise of the Chinese*..., cit., pp. 95-116.

[27] R. Samuels, *Japan's Goldilocks Strategy*, "The Washington Quarterly", vol. 29 (2006), no. 4, pp. 111-127.

[28] This is, of course, a simplification, since there are many different ideas about what it is in the constitution that should change. Nevertheless, it is

During the Cold War, the idealist right was largely side-lined in favor of the supporters of the mainstream Yoshida Doctrine, who saw Japan's interests as best served by "keeping its head down" in international politics, focusing on economic growth and leaving it to the U.S. to care for the defence of Japan[29]. In spite of their marginalization, their politics do have a long history. This can be traced back to influential LDP figures like Kishi Nobusuke (Prime Minister 1957-60) and Hatoyama Ichiro's (Prime Minister 1954-1956) conservative Democratic Party, which merged with Yoshida Shigeru's (Prime Minister 1946-47 and 1948-45) Liberal Party to form the LDP in 1955. As Nakanishi Hiroshi has argued, Hatoyama, Kishi, and later Fukuda Takeo (Prime Minister 1974-76) saw Japan under the Yoshida Doctrine as not autonomous and on unequal footing with other states[30]. Nevertheless, they and what became their LDP faction, the *Seiwaken,* lost the battle for the direction of Japanese foreign policy with what became the Cold War establishment of the LDP, made up by the *Kochikai* faction on the one hand, founded by Ikeda Hayato in 1957, and the followers of Tanaka Kakuei on the other[31]. *Seiwaken* and the idealist right were resigned to serve as the "anti-mainstream" of the party, delivering prime ministers but largely accepting the Yoshida consensus[32]. With electoral reform and a changing international landscape, the popularity of the Yoshida Doctrine waned in the 1990s. This brought about the rise of what Tobias Harris has called the "new conservatives", gathered around the autonomy-oriented *Seiwaken* mileu[33]. Since Mori's Yoshiro's prime ministership in 2000, *Seiwaken* has delivered every LDP prime minister apart from Aso

reasonable to say that political discourse in Japan has moved in a direction more conducive to changing the constitution and Article 9 in some way.

[29] Suzuki, *The Rise of the Chinese*..., cit., pp. 95-116.

[30] H. Nakanishi,「敗戦国の外交戦略: 吉田茂の外交とその継承者」『戦争史研究国際フォーラム報告書. 第 2 回』(2003), pp. 122-135.

[31] J. A. A. *Stockwin, Japanese Foreign Policy and Understanding Japanese Politics: The Writings of J.A.A. Stockwin*, Leiden, 2012, p. 44.

[32] K. Zakowski, *Kochikai of the Japanese Liberal Democratic Party and its Evolution after the Cold War*, "The Korean Journal of International Studies", vol. 9 (2011), no. 2, p. 183; T. Harris, The Iconoclast: Shinzo Abe and the New Japan, London, 2020, p. 28.

[33] Harris. *The Iconoclast*..., cit., p. 58.

Taro (2008-9), Suga Yoshihide (2020-2021), and Kishida Fumio (2021-), all of whom were close confidants of the prime minister who served the longest during this time, Abe Shinzo. This former anti-mainstream in the LDP has effectively displaced the former Yoshida mainstream in the party, and with their rise, their emphasis on Japan's lack of autonomy has also gained greater weight in foreign policy discourse, as the author of this paper has shown and as is recalled in the next section[34].

The End of the Cold War and the Post-2006 Abe Governments

This section draws on previous research, particularly by the author of this article, to give an overview of how the values/autonomy was constituted during the Abe governments. First, it is worth mentioning that the change toward a combined narrative of values and autonomy did not happen overnight. As Karel Zakowski, Beata Bochorodyzy, and Marcin Socha have argued, the AFP has resemblances to the foreign policy pushed by Abe Shintaro as foreign minister in the 1980s[35]. This was dubbed "creative diplomacy" and aimed, among other things, at increasing cooperation with the Western block by emphasizing common values. The approach stemmed from Japan's "global responsibilities to the international community"[36], a type of wording that appears often in the contemporary Japanese values/autonomy narrative, emphasizing that Japan has a certain given role to fulfill. As Suzuki has argued, however, "Japan's democratic values" were not used to the same extent during the Cold War as key markers of Japanese national identity, as they have been since its end[37]. This rhetoric first caught steam after the end of the Cold War and received another boost by the first Abe government (2006-2007), which brought it to the fore in a way previously not seen. The post-Cold War boost revolved around Japan's Official Development Assistance policy, while the second boost came with Foreign Minister Aso Taro's introduction of the Arc of Freedom and Prosperity (AFP)

[34] Isaksson, *Longtime Democrat*..., cit., pp. 1-14.

[35] K. Zakowski - B. Bochorodycz - M. Socha, *Japan's Foreign Policy Making: Central Government Reforms, Decision-Making Processes, and Diplomacy*, Cham, 2018, p. 118.

[36] *Ibid.*

[37] Suzuki, *The Rise of the Chinese*..., cit., p 109.

and value-oriented diplomacy, two strategies that aimed to support an "Arc" of states throughout Eurasia in becoming mature democracies[38]. In 1992, Japan introduced its first ever Official Development Assistance Charter, stating that its aid is meant to support "democratization, human rights, and a market-oriented economy in developing countries"[39]. Authors focusing on Japan's ODA policy, such as Atsuko Geiger have tended to treat the increased use of universal values narratives as an extension of the emphasis on promoting democracy from the ODA Charter[40]. In the face of the security challenge constituted by China, Japan is said to "hope to strengthen the ties with its allies" through policies like the AFP. Taniguchi Tomohiko has similarly argued that the AFP was an effort to cement its credentials as a reliable partner, but also meant to, crucially, "establish Japan's democratic identity"[41]. The latter point gets to what is the core of the matter since the first Abe government's push for universal values and highlights what those focusing on the ODA Charter miss: during the Abe government, universal values became a central part of Japanese ontological security seeking through the autonomy narrative, exemplified by the references to how Japan needs to lead. As shown by previous research[42], this combined narrative during the Abe governments can be exemplified by Bluebook entries that talk about how the international community appreciates Japan's efforts emphasizing freedom, democracy, fundamental human rights, and the rule of law, and that Japan is bringing back its "strong presence" and "self-confidence" to the world stage[43]. Aso, as foreign minister in

[38] T. Aso (2006),「自由と繁栄の弧」をつくる 拡がる日本外交の地平 外務大臣 麻生太郎 日本国際問題研究所セミナー講演」[Online], https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/press/enzetsu/18/easo_1130.html. (Accessed on 24.4.2022).

[39] K. Sugiura,「日本の「民主化外交」–1990年代以降の日本の民主化支援活動」『京都女子大学現代社会研究』vol. 9 (2006), pp. 28.

[40] A. Geiger. (2019). Japan's Support for Democracy-Related Issues – Mapping Survey. [Online], https://www.jcie.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Japan-Democracy-Survey-2019_FINAL.pdf. (Accessed on 13.08.2022).

[41] T. Taniguchi, *Beyond the "Arc of Freedom and Prosperity": Debating Universal Values in Japanese Grand Strategy*, "GMF Asia Paper Series", 2010.

[42] Isaksson, *Longtime Democrat...*, cit., pp. 1-14.

[43] MOFA (2013),「 平成 25年版外交青書(外交青書 2013)の刊行に当たって」 in 『外交青書2013』 [Online], https://www.

the first Abe government, wrote in his Bluebook introduction that Japan seeks to "contribute to stability and prosperity through universal values"[44]. The 2018 version of the bluebook had Foreign Minister Kono Taro stating that the international order built on universal values is threatened, and that Japan needs to take on an even greater role than before[45]. Abe wrote in his op-ed in Project Syndicate in late 2012 that Japan is "one of the oldest sea-faring democracies in Asia" and that the "U.S. needs Japan as much as Japan needs the U.S. The op-ed proposed a "democratic security diamond" now known as the "QUAD"[46], drawing clear parallels between Japan's democratic history, the need for Japanese leadership, and international security.

Values and Autonomy Between the Abe Governments

This section examines MOFA Bluebooks and prime minister's speeches to the National Diet during the intervening years between the two Abe governments. As briefly outlined above, and as shown in previous research, during the Abe governments values were fused with a history-writing of Japan as a long-time democrat and as a state whose leadership role in the world is needed. In 2007, Abe stepped down from the prime ministership due to health issues. He was succeeded by Fukuda Yasuo, also from the LDP but traditionally seen as more interested in good ties with China[47]. He was also a rival of Aso Taro, who had been foreign minister during

mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/bluebook/2013/pdf/pdfs/0_2.pdf. (Accessed on 24.09.2022).

[44] MOFA (2007),「平成19年版(2007年)外交青書の刊行に当たって」 in 『外交青書 2007』 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. [Online], https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/bluebook/2007/pdf/pdfs/0_1.pdf. (Accessed on 29.10.2021).

[45] MOFA. (2018).「平成30年版外交青書（外交青書2018）巻頭言」 in 『外交青書 2018』 [Online], https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/bluebook/2018/pdf/pdfs/0_1.pdf. (Accessed on 29.4.2022). See Isaksson, *Longtime Democrat...* for a more detailed account of how this narrative is constituted.

[46] S. Abe, *Asia's Democratic Security Diamond. Project Syndicate*, "Project Syndicate", 2013, [link], https://www.project-syndicate.org/onpoint/a-strategic-alliance-for-japan-and-india-by-shinzoabe?barrier=accesspaylog. (Accessed on 18.5.2022).

[47] Zakowski *et al.*, *Japan's Foreign Policy*..., cit., p. 48.

Abe's first government and was then closely tied to the universal values narrative. Neither Fukuda lasted long in the prime minister's office. He was replaced by Aso himself in 2008, who subsequently lost the lower house election in 2009 to the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ). The foreign minister's introductions to the MOFA Bluebook from these years steer clear of "universal values" or "democracy" and the autonomy narrative. The 2008 version is low key, neither referring to values nor to autonomy, but the 2009 version by Aso's foreign minister Nakasone Hirofumi contains clear references to the autonomy narrative, aiming at international importance and prestige for Japan. It is stated that the aim of diplomacy is to defend the "honor" of the nation and to make the people proud of their country. Japan is said to have overcome many challenges and can be proud of its achievements in the fields of technology and human capital. In an international society with many problems, a Japan that has a "proactive" and "autonomous" foreign policy will lead to self-confidence and pride, he writes[48]. Going by the Bluebook introductions, the picture is thus blurred regarding the discursive elements of values and autonomy during the two LDP governments that followed Abe's first government; values are not there, whereas autonomy is. As Hosoya has surmised, even Aso steering clear of the AFP during his prime ministership might have had to do with how it became regarded as a "right-wing foreign policy doctrine" that would alienate China[49]. In addition to the MOFA Bluebooks, the prime minister's yearly speech to the regular session of the National Diet in January is a useful venue to test which words make appearances and which do not. Fukuda's speech in 2008 contained no references to the words "universal", "values", "democracy", "human rights", "rule of law", or "freedom"[50]. Aso's 2009 speech did, however, stating toward the end that he had "a belief" in how pursuing economic prosperity

[48] MOFA (2009),「平成21年版外交青書（外交青書2009）の刊行に当たって」in『外交青書2009 [Online], https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/bluebook/2009/pdf/pdfs/0_1.pdf. (Accessed on 18.5.2022).

[49] Hosoya, *The Rise and Fall*..., cit., p. 20.

[50] Prime Minister's Office (2008),「第１６９回国会における福田内閣総理大臣施政方針演説」. [Online], https://warp.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/233240/www.kantei.go.jp/jp/hukudaspeech/2008/01/18housin.html. (Accessed on 19.5.2022).

and democracy lead to peace and happiness, and that Japan's past showed this[51]. Here, he echoed the narrative of Japan as a long-time democrat that was a major part of his introduction of the AFP in 2006 at the Japan Institute of International Affairs[52], and likewise a constitutive part of the values/autonomy narrative. Continuing, he said that Japan should support young democracies who value human rights, open markets, and freedom. He dwelled at the start of his speech on the need for Japan to make a "contribution" to a new "order" based on rules. With the financial crisis as a backdrop, this was much focused on the international financial system, but nevertheless resembled talk in the later Abe government of Japan taking on a greater role in contributing to international security, a central part of the autonomy narrative[53].

The DPJ came to power in 2009, pushing the LDP out of power for only the second time in the postwar period. The party and particularly its first prime minister, Hatoyama Yukio, had certain "Asianist" leanings, seeking to nurture relations with China and striving for more independence from the U.S.[54]. To that end, his government introduced the idea of an "East Asian Community", and Hatoyama himself has since been involved in the NGO East Asian Community Institute. The ideas represented by Hatoyama are arguably what is left today of what Suzuki called the "idealist left". As Sneider has argued, however, the DPJ ended up "learning" to nurture the U.S.-Japan alliance[55], and the Bluebooks from the time of the DPJ show, as was the case during Fukuda and Aso, a blurred picture regarding values narratives and references to Japanese autonomy. In 2009, Okada Katsuya as foreign minister focused much of his attention on a need for general "international cooperation"[56]; in 2010, Matsumoto Takeaki called for Japan to

[51] Prime Minister's Office (2009), 「第171回国会における麻生内閣総理大臣施政方針演説」[Online], https://warp.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/284573/www.kantei.go.jp/jp/asospeech/2009/01/28housin.html. (Accessed on 19.5.2022).

[52] Isaksson, *Longtime Democrat...*, cit., pp. 1-14.

[53] *Ibid*.

[54] D. Sneider, *The New Asianism: Japanese Foreign Policy under the Democratic Party of Japan*, "Asia Policy", vol. 12 (2011), pp. 99-130.

[55] *Ibid*.

[56] MOFA (2010), 「平成22年版外交青書（外交青書2010）の刊行に当たって」in『外交青書2010 [Online], https://www.mofa.go.jp/

take a "leading role" on the debate on issues like nuclear non-proliferation and military arms control but left out the universal values narrative[57]. Foreign Minister Genba Koichiro, however, did write in 2012 that Japan needs to make efforts to create an "order that is based on rich and stable democratic values"[58]. This is an appearance of the values narrative recognizable from the Abe bluebooks mentioned above and in previous research. Looking at the Diet speeches from the DPJs prime ministers, Hatoyama did not mention democracy, but did at two points refer to human rights. In the first instance, he was talking about how he wants to "protect lives" in the world, and specifically ensure that "everyone can drink clean water, everyone can, with no discrimination, have their human rights protected and receive an education"[59]. He did state that this involved a necessary "contribution", as is common in the autonomy narrative to say that Japan needs to take on a leadership role. However, in this case it referred to a contribution that the international community owed to the children he was talking about, with no references to Japan. He also referred to "values", but in a slightly ambiguous and more pluralist way: Japan had the flexibility to have values and cultures be combined. It should therefore strive to combine "traditional culture" valuing coexistence with nature, with a mindset to be a "bridge" to other cultures[60]. The DPJ's second prime minister, Kan Naoto, did not touch on the values/autonomy narrative in any meaningful way in his speech, mentioning once the need for a free trade area in

mofaj/gaiko/bluebook/2010/pdf/pdfs/0_2.pdf. (Accessed on 18.5.2022).

[57] MOFA (2011),「平成23年版外交青書（外交青書2011）の刊行に当たって」in『外交青書2010 [Online], https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/bluebook/2011/pdf/pdfs/0_2.pdf. (Accessed on 18.5.2022).

[58] MOFA (2012),「平成 24年版外交青書（外交青書 2012）の刊行に当たって」in『外交青書2012 [Online], https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/bluebook/2012/pdf/pdfs/0_2.pdf. (Accessed on 18.5.2022).

[59] Prime Minister's Office (2010),「第174回国会における鳩山内閣総理大臣施政方針演説」[Online], https://warp.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1042913/www.kantei.go.jp/jp/hatoyama/statement/201001/29siseihousin.html. (Accessed on 18.5.2022).

[60] Prime Minister's Office, 第174回..., A connection to *Nihonjinron* ideas which include romanticization of the relationship of the Japanese to nature can be noted here, but is in either case a different animal from the values/autonomy narrative.

Asia[61]. The DPJ's third prime minister, Noda Yoshihiko, however, emphasized in his speech how Japan should "deepen dialogue" in Asia on issues where "values" like "freedom", "democracy", and "the rule of law" are shared[62]. Noda's bringing this up squares well with his speech at the UN General Assembly in 2012, where he emphasized the importance of the rule of law, and of how Japan has always been committed to it[63]. This brief exposé of the MOFA Bluebooks and prime ministers' speeches to the Diet from the years between the two Abe governments show, all in all, a slight pause to the official emphasis on universal values – apart from Aso's speech, and Noda's later during the DPJ government – but in either case, it showcases a lingering of the references to Japanese autonomy. The picture is, as mentioned above, blurred, and seems to offer an opportunity to examine different types and different levels of identity anxiety among different Japanese political camps.

Conclusion

This paper's analysis of MOFA Bluebooks and prime minister yearly speeches during the years between the two Abe governments has shown mixed results. References to universal values and Japanese leadership were sparse particularly during the Fukuda, Hatoyama, and Kan governments, but shone through during the governments of Aso and Noda. Given Aso's political leanings, his being the one who introduced the AFP to the world, and his closeness to Abe, it is not particularly surprising that his government showed an interest in this narrative. Noda's touching on these values in his speech

[61] "Free" trade being, arguably, a discursive construction that links a certain type of trade to "freedom"; Prime Minister's Office (2011), 「第１７６回国会における菅内閣総理大臣所信表明演説」[Online], https://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/kan/statement/201010/01syosin.html (Accessed on 19.5.2022).

[62] Prime Minister's Office (2012), 「第百八十回国会における野田内閣総理大臣施政方針演説」[Online], https://warp.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/4410784/www.kantei.go.jp/jp/noda/statement2/20120124siseihousin.html. (Accessed on 18.5.2022).

[63] MOFA (2012),「 第67回 国連総会 野田総理による一般討論演説「明日への責任・3つの叡智」」[Online], https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/unsokai/67_address_pm_jp.html. (Accessed on 13.8.2022).

is a different matter, and rather suggests that universal values are a popular narrative across political camps in Japan. Whether the lack of the universal values/autonomy narrative during the other governments comes from different conceptions of ontological security requires a more in-depth study of which themes move DPJ political groupings and those close to Fukuda in the LDP care about[64]. What the paper has shown, however, is that the long-desired Japanese identity as an autonomous state has indeed been visible in its universal values narrative in the intervening years between the two Abe governments, albeit to a weaker extent than during the Abe governments. This suggests that anxiety related to Japanese autonomy can be a solution to the problem of why Japan emphasizes universal values internationally at the same time as freedom of the press, for example, is experiencing threats at home. The rise of the *Seiwaken* within the LDP has correlated with this new use of universal values together with autonomy rhetoric, and the spread of the combined narrative to parts of the opposition can be seen as a sign of its growing dominance.

How do we make sense of the "blurred picture" between 2008-2012? Given the long-standing ontological insecurities among Japanese political actors regarding autonomy[65], and the presence of this narrative within universal values narratives[66], there would seem to be room for an ontological security theory that accounts for part of it. Ontological security studies in International Relations have been accused of uncritically applying a concept made for individuals directly to states[67]. This would seem to assume much continuity, whereas the combined narrative studied here is one that was not present before, and indeed one that displays a measure of discontinuity, since the intervening years had less of it. A more sociological approach to ontological security,

[64] Fukuda was, it should be mentioned, also from the *Seiwaken.* This reminds us that *Seiwaken* membership is no surefire way to explain the narrative, but does not take away from the fact that the faction is now dominated by members with similar views on Japan's role in the world to that pushed by the Abe governments.

[65] Suzuki, *The Rise of the Chinese...*, cit., pp. 95-116.

[66] Isaksson, *Longtime Democrat...*, cit., pp. 1-14.

[67] K. Gustafsson - N.C. Krickel-Choi, *Returning to the roots of ontological security: insights from the existentialist anxiety literature*, "European Journal of International Relations", vol. 26 (2020), no, 3, pp. 875-895.

along the lines of what Stuart Croft proposes, one that focuses on how meanings are intersubjectively constructed between individuals and communities within states might be a fruitful venue for future research on an observably widespread but not (during the period studied) dominant conception of universal values and Japanese autonomy[68]. Such an approach would broaden knowledge on how the concern for autonomy, the postwar version of which was originally found in the *Seiwaken* milieu, seems to have gained ground with some during the intervening years (for example Noda), but not others.

This article cannot claim to have proven ontological insecurity as the explanatory variable behind Japan's values narrative, nor did it set out to do so. Stemming from an interpretivist tradition, it hopes, however, to have contributed to a greater understanding of the motivations behind it, without attempting any "falsification" of other explanations[69]. Whether one subscribes to the existence of an all-encompassing Japanese "Grand Strategy" or not, the values narrative of the past two decades is a ubiquitous part of Japanese foreign policy, and as we have seen, that was particularly the case during the Abe governments. Given unstable contemporary geopolitics and Japan's significant material power, how Japanese political actors understand their place in the world is as urgent a question as any.

[68] S. Croft, *Constructing Ontological Insecurity: The Insecuritization of Britain's Muslims*, "Contemporary Security Policy", vol. 33 (2012), no. 2, pp. 219-235.

[69] Steele, *Ontological Security*..., cit., p. 8.

In Memoriam:
Ammiraglio Pier Paolo Ramoino

Lo scorso gennaio, poco più che ottantenne, è mancato il Contrammiraglio Pier Paolo Ramoino, uno dei più illustri studiosi di Storia navale e del Potere Marittimo della sua generazione. Lo ricordiamo sulle pagine dei *Quaderni* ai quali ha più volte collaborato.

Durante la sua carriera nella Marina Militare aveva comandato la cannoniera *Mastino*, il dragamine *Edera*, l'aliscafo *Sparviero*, la fregata *Centauro*, il cacciatorpediniere *Ardito*. Era poi stato Capo di Stato Maggiore della 1ª Divisione Navale. Nelle destinazioni a terra è stato Capo Ufficio allestimento Nuove Navi a La Spezia, Capo Ufficio Aliscafi e Nuove Costruzioni dello Stato Maggiore della Marina, Consulente Navale del Comando Generale della Guardia di Finanza e Direttore dei Corsi Ufficiali dell'Accademia navale.

La sua carriera si era poi incentrata sull'Istituto di Guerra Marittima, dove dal 1982 a tutto il 1996 ricoprì le cattedre di Strategia e di Storia Militare. Per dieci anni fu anche Direttore dei Corsi di Stato Maggiore, per terminare, nel grado di Contrammiraglio, al comando per tre anni dello stesso Istituto, nella fase di preparazione al trasferimento a Venezia, con la nuova denominazione di Istituto di Studi Militari Marittimi.

Transitato in ausiliaria, continuò ad essere Docente di Studi Strategici presso l'Accademia Navale di Livorno, iniziò a collaborare con la Cattedra di Storia delle Relazioni Internazionali dell'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore a Milano e fu Vice Presidente del Centro Universitario di Studi Strategici e Internazionali dell'Università di Firenze.

Insignito della *Silver Membership* dell'*U.S. Naval Institute*, era stato consigliere nel direttivo della Società di Storia Militare Italiana e dell'Associazione di tecnica navale ATENA. Ricopriva altresì gli incarichi di Membro Decano del Comitato Consultivo

dell'Ufficio Storico della Marina Militare e di componente dei Consigli Direttivi della *Rivista Marittima* e del *Bollettino d'Archivio dell'Ufficio Storico della Marina Militare*.

Si è occupato particolarmente di studi di geopolitica, di strategia marittima e di storia delle Forze Armate tra le due guerre mondiali, pubblicando numerosi articoli e diversi volumi. I suoi volumi più recenti sono stati: *Fondamenti di strategia navale* (Forum di Relazioni Internazionali, Roma 1999), la biografia dell'Ammiraglio *Romeo Bernotti* (Ufficio Storico della Marina Militare, Roma 2006) e *Per una strategia marittima del XXI secolo* (Aracne, Roma 2009), oltre alle curatele di due classici di strategia marittima: H. Richmond, *Il potere marittimo nell'epoca moderna* (Forum di Relazioni Internazionali, Roma, 1998) e O. Giamberardino, *L'arte della guerra in mare* (Forum di Relazioni Internazionali, Roma 2002).

La sua lunga permanenza in incarichi di docenza, direttivi e di comando all'Istituto di Guerra Marittima lo aveva reso la memoria storica della Forza Armata. Conosceva tutti gli Ufficiali giunti al vertice della Marina Militare, che erano stati suoi allievi e lo ricordavano con grande stima e simpatia. Aveva messo le sue conoscenze a disposizione della nostra Università, favorendo varie conferenze di Capi di Stato maggiore e di altri alti ufficiali. Lui stesso fu più volte conferenziere, in particolare alla serie di convegni annuali sull'Alleanza Atlantica. Affidandogli un tema da svolgere si era sempre sicuri che lo avrebbe affrontato con rigore metodologico, adeguata documentazione, una esposizione parlata e scritta brillante. Per molti anni tenne anche un apprezzatissimo seminario sulla nuova geopolitica dopo la fine della Guerra Fredda al Master in Diplomacy dell'ISPI. Nei suoi scritti coniugava magistralmente e con fine interdisciplinarietà la storia e la geopolitica.

Alla tradizionale signorilità degli Ufficiali di Marina, univa uno spirito arguto e una conversazione vivace ma mai sopra le righe. Da quando lo conobbi all'inizio degli anni '90 del secolo scorso innumerevoli sono state le occasioni di stimolanti incontri scientifici accompagnati dal piacere della convivialità. "Buon vento e mare calmo", Ammiraglio.

Il Direttore
Massimo de Leonardis

Gli Autori

Erik Isaksson – PhD Candidate at the Graduate School of East Asian Studies, Freie Universität Berlin and an Associate Fellow at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs (Ui).

Noemi Lanna – Associate Professor of Modern and Contemporary History of Japan and Japan in the International System at the Department of Asian, African and Mediterranean Studies, University of Naples L'Orientale.

Raimondo Neironi – Lecturer in History of Japan at the Department of Humanities, University of Turin, and in History of East Asia at the Department of Languages, Literature and Modern Culture, Alma Mater Studiorum – University of Bologna. He is also Research Fellow at the 'Asia Prospects' programme, T.wai – Torino World Affairs Institute.

Federico Lorenzo Ramaioli – PhD. Diplomat and lawyer, Deputy Head of Mission in the Italian Embassy in Doha (Qatar). Senior Research Associate at gLAWcal (UK).

Marco Zappa – Assistant Professor of Japanese Studies at the Department of Asian and North African Studies, Ca' Foscari University of Venice.

finito di stampare
nel mese di novembre 2022
presso la LITOGRAFIA SOLARI
Peschiera Borromeo (MI)
su materiali e tecnologia ecocompatibili

EDUCatt - Ente per il Diritto allo Studio Universitario dell'Università Cattolica
Largo Gemelli 1, 20123 Milano - tel. 02.7234.22.35 - fax 02.80.53.215
e-mail: editoriale.dsu@educatt.it (produzione); librario.dsu@educatt.it (distribuzione)
web: www.educatt.it/libri
ISBN: 979-12-5535-040-8/ ISBN edizione digitale: 979-12-5535-014-5
ISSN: 2532-5302 / ISSN edizione digitale: 2532-5310

I *Quaderni di Scienze Politiche*, la cui pubblicazione è iniziata nel 2011 sotto la denominazione di *Quaderni del Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche*, si ispirano ad una tradizione scientifica interdisciplinare orientata allo studio dei fenomeni politici nelle loro espressioni istituzionali e organizzative a livello internazionale e, in un'ottica comparatistica, anche all'interno agli Stati. Essi sono promossi dal Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche dell'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, costituito nel 1983 e interprete fedele della tradizione dell'Ateneo.

Il fondatore dell'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Padre Agostino Gemelli, affermava nel 1942 che diritto, storia e politica costituiscono «un tripode» sul quale si fondano le Facoltà di Scienze Politiche, delle quali difendeva l'identità e la funzione. Circa vent'anni dopo, Francesco Vito, successore del fondatore nel Rettorato e già Preside della Facoltà di Scienze Politiche, scriveva: «Noi rimaniamo fedeli alla tradizione scientifica secondo la quale l'indagine del fenomeno politico non può essere esaurita senza residui da una sola disciplina scientifica. Concorrono alla comprensione della politica gli studi storici, quelli filosofici, quelli giuridici, quelli socio-economici». Per Gianfranco Miglio, Preside per trent'anni della Facoltà di Scienze Politiche dell'Università Cattolica e per otto anche Docente di Storia dei Trattati e Politica Internazionale, la storia è il laboratorio privilegiato della ricerca politologica.

Pubblicati sia a stampa sia *online* sul sito internet www.quaderniscienzepolitiche.it, i *Quaderni* ospitano articoli soggetti a *Peer Review*.

ORBEM PRUDENTER INVESTIGARE ET VERACITER AGNOSCERE

In copertina: Martin Waldseemüller (1470 ca.-post 1522), *Mappa della terra*, 1507. Edito a Saint-Die, Lorena, attualmente alla Staatsbibliothek di Berlino - Foto: Ruth Schacht. Map Division. © 2019. Foto Scala, Firenze.
La mappa disegnata nel 1507 dal cartografo tedesco Martin Waldseemüller, la prima nella quale il Nuovo Continente scoperto da Cristoforo Colombo è denominato "America" e dichiarata nel 2005 dall'UNESCO "Memoria del mondo", è stata scelta come immagine caratterizzante dell'identità del Dipartimento, le cui aree scientifiche hanno tutte una forte dimensione internazionalistica.

9 791255 350408
euro 15,00